

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

The education system in South Africa has undergone several changes since 1994. Specifically, inclusion has in recent years brought about increasing demands for schools to provide equality of opportunity for all learners.

Inclusive education refers to a broad philosophical position related to the educational rights of all children. In South Africa, inclusive education protects all children from discrimination and presents a commitment to creating access to and provision of education that accommodates the needs of children (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 1997). Inclusive education can thus be defined as “a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners” (Naicker, 1999, p.19). Inclusion refers to an education policy that stems from the standpoint of inclusive education. The policy ensures the accommodation of a variety of educational needs that are required to be included. Donald, Lazarus, and Lolwana (1997) explain that the emphasis here falls on the system meeting the needs of the child without separating or excluding the child from the system.

The reality of providing for inclusion in schools however is a complex issue. According to Prinsloo (2001), one of the problems facing South Africa in bringing to fruition the principles of inclusive education is managing learning diversity. Lomofsky, Roberts and Mvambi (1999) assert that diversity is the keyword in the inclusive classroom. The inclusive classroom accommodates learners with a range of learning needs and intellectual difficulties, learners with cultural and linguistic differences, learners with emotional and socio-economic difficulties, and learners with various physical disabilities. They further articulate that the inclusive classroom needs to allow and provide for independent individual work but also for group co-operative working. This implies that teachers are required to learn and apply different teaching methodologies and skills to meet the needs of multi-approached teaching for diversity within the inclusive classroom.

Research trends (Reynolds, 2001) indicate that a crucial influence on the successful implementation of any change within an education system is the teacher. It is the teacher's

knowledge, beliefs and values that are brought to bear in creating an effective learning environment for children. The way in which teachers carry out their professional activity has a profound impact on the extent to which children are able to learn adequately. This study acknowledges teachers as fundamental actors within the changing education system, and intends to determine the teaching, support and training needs of a sample of teachers, in terms of what they require in order to manage the diversity within their inclusive classrooms.

Chapter Two provides an account of the background to the changes in education both globally and locally, in order to contextualise the study. The chapter also reviews the literature that addresses teachers within an inclusive educational setting, by examining international research and research conducted within South African institutions.

Chapter Three describes the aim of the research, the research questions, the sample, the procedure, the research design, and the method of data analysis of the study.

The results of the research are presented in Chapter Four.

Chapter Five provides an in depth discussion of the results of the study, examines the limitations of the research and provides suggestions for future research within this field of study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

In keeping with current international trends, South African education has adopted a policy of inclusion. This policy of inclusion is intended to accommodate all children within a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of its learners. An inclusive education system seeks to integrate children with special educational needs, as well as those from diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, educational, and economic backgrounds. This literature review establishes an understanding of the context in which the global movement towards inclusive education occurred.

### **2.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **2.1.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

In recent years inclusion has become a crucial consideration within the international education arena (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Equality and equal opportunities have been an important focus for debate in education since the 1950s. Initially, concern centred on the effects of social class on educational achievement and the need to move towards a meritocracy where children from all kinds of backgrounds could achieve success. During the 1960s a number of countries (e.g. Scandinavia, United Kingdom, America) began to recognise the rights of learners with special education needs through varying forms of legislation. They envisioned the provision of education for learners with special needs as shifting from separate schooling to what became known as “integration” or the placement of learners into regular schools (Gordon, 2000). “Integration” in education was driven by the surge of liberalisation in society in the 1960s, which grew from the economic prosperity and social optimism of the post World War II years in western countries (Vislie, 1995). However, “integration” was increasingly seen as a limited attempt to accommodate and support all learners in regular schools and thus the term “inclusion” was born. The move to inclusion implied that there was a shift to take into cognisance a wider range of learner needs and a greater commitment to create regular schools that could be capable of meeting all these needs.

Thus, in the 1990s the issues of gender, race, disability and class seem to have combined within a global shift towards inclusion, that is achieving a society that reflects not only the absence of discrimination but rather the availability of opportunities for all individuals to participate in every facet of society (Gordon, 2000; Reynolds, 2001).

During the last two decades, research (Prinsloo, 2001) indicates that international policy focussed on providing quality education for all learners within a unitary system. The shift towards inclusive education was initiated so that all children have an equal right and opportunity to learn and to remove the stigma and stereotyping of learners with barriers to learning. For everyday teaching and learning, this implied the promotion of the equal participation of all learners in the learning process, irrespective of their learning difficulties.

International policy documents, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UNESCO's Salamanca Statement, have influenced educational reform globally. The change to accommodate all learners was highlighted in The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education, which laid down the framework of inclusion at a world conference on special needs education in Spain in July 1994. This international policy document asserted:

- 1) *The right of every child to an education is proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was forcefully reaffirmed by the World Declaration on Education for All.*
- 2) *That schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.*
- 3) *It assumes that human differences are normal and that learning must accordingly be adapted to the needs of the child rather than the child fitted to preordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature of the learning process. A child-centred pedagogy is beneficial to all students and, as a consequence, to society as a whole.*

The Salamanca Statement thus indicated that inclusion is intended to reconstruct the provision of education for learners with disabilities as well as to expand educational opportunities to marginalized groups who historically have had little or no access to schooling (Gordon, 2000). Furthermore, the statement also highlighted the social benefits derived from inclusive education,

which include increased acceptance and appreciation of diversity, improved communication and social skills, increased moral and ethical development, and increased self-esteem (Stafford and Green, 1996).

As is evident from the above discussion, much attention has been devoted to the topic of inclusion in recent years. The concept of inclusion has been extensively debated in various journals (e.g. the European Journal of Special Needs Education, the South African Journal of Education, the Journal of the International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities). In the following section, an attempt is made to trace the theoretical underpinnings of inclusion and the research evidence that supports the paradigm shift towards inclusive education.

#### 2.1.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Historically, provision in education for special needs has been based on the concept of exclusion. Those who were unable to function or learn in the traditional classroom were excluded and provided with other forms of education such as special classes or special schools. However, over time additional knowledge, research and practice, as well as changing political and social norms began to accumulate in favour of the concept of inclusion when applied particularly to education (Harcombe, 2001).

Traditionally, there had been segregation of learners with handicaps (as they were known in the United Kingdom after the 1944 Education Act) into separate schools. In the sixties and seventies there was increasing criticism of this segregation and questions began to be raised about how education services might be organised differently. In the UK the Warnock Commission was constituted in 1974 to look into the education of handicapped children. One of the key findings of this report in 1978 was that the categorisation of children as handicapped was not helpful because no direct link between a person's educational needs and the handicap could be made, and that the "handicap resulting from a disability had to be seen as relative to the constraints and resources of the environment and to the aspirations of the individual and the demands of society" (Wedell, 1990, p. 86). The Warnock Commission thus established the basis for the integration of children with special needs into ordinary schools. This new approach to disability, which focused

more on abilities than disabilities, and on justice and equity rather than isolation and neglect (Engelbrecht, 1999) spurred on the movement towards a more unitary system of education.

Inclusion, therefore, shifts the focus onto the school rather than the child. Porter (in Thomas, Walker and Webb, 1998) provides an excellent summary of the differences between what he terms the “traditional approach” and the “inclusion approach” (See table in Appendix I). One of the main differences he outlines is that in the past, education required the referral of a child to an expert. What he thus implies is that mainstream teachers did not feel qualified or competent enough to provide education to a learner with a significant learning problem. Experts have in the past promoted the idea that only those with special qualifications are equipped to assess, teach, and make decisions about children who are significantly different from others. There was a trend in removing such children from the mainstream after they had been categorised by a professional and placing them into the special system. Thus, mainstream education was relieved of the administrative, curricular, and educational burden of accommodating these children. The practice of excluding children with special needs from mainstream education stands in stark contrast to the inclusive framework. Quite the opposite, the central aspect of inclusion asserts the deconstruction of the theory that only special experts are equipped to teach special children.

Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) assert that an inclusive education approach reflects a move from a deficit model of adjustment towards systemic change. The theory presented widely in contemporary psychology (Adelman, 1992; Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 1997; Engelbrecht, 1999; Harcombe, 2001) asserts that the framework of inclusion considers special needs in education as emerging from the difficulties encountered between the individual and their environment. Thus, according to this theory, the system is required to adapt in order to accommodate and meet the individual’s needs.

The shift to inclusion occurred partly because of evidence from educational research that showed how special schools were not as effective as were expected. From the 1960s onwards the global push for civil rights liberated people with disabilities to voice their anger about the stigma, degradation and curricular and social limits imposed by segregated education. A number of research studies (Christophos and Rens, 1969, Galloway and Goodwin, 1979, Lipsky and

Gartner, 1987, Reynolds, 1988, Anderson and Pellicer, 1990, cited in Thomas, Walker and Webb 1998) have been carried out regarding the lack of success of a segregated education system. These studies provided evidence and motivation for inclusion as a more appropriate framework to address the need to restructure education, and implied that inclusion won partly because it was “right”.

The above discussion suggests that various ideas, owing to thinking in politics and in psychology, have converged to provide a case for inclusion. Given that the move to inclusion is such a principled one however, it is all the more important that research be focussed on making inclusion policy work in practice. Researchers should investigate the problems within an inclusive education system so that the obstacles can be recognised and overcome.

In looking at the practical concerns of inclusive education and going beyond the theory, what is important to consider is the vast difference in implementing inclusive principles within the education systems of a developed nation as compared to the education systems found within a developing or underdeveloped nation. For developed countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, or New Zealand, that have well-resourced education systems, implementing a policy of inclusion has over time proved to effectively include the large majority of learners. Still, for such countries, inclusion has for the most part had to do mainly with the educational provision for learners with disabilities. For developing or underdeveloped countries however, not only is it children with disabilities but also the large population of learners without disabilities that have little or no access to education which need to be accommodated within a unitary education system (Peresuh and Ndawi, 1998). For South Africa specifically, this move to create the accommodation of and opportunity for education for all children holds true. However, to understand what the adoption of an inclusive education policy means for a developing nation such as South Africa, it is essential that the history of this shift first be understood.

### 2.1.3. THE BIRTH OF INCLUSION IN SOUTH AFRICA

During the apartheid era the political, social, economic, and educational structures of South Africa were based on separate development, exclusion from power, and discrimination on the

basis of race. With the birth of a new democratic country in 1994, the policy of apartheid that had dominated the country for more than forty years was removed and the movement in South Africa toward a more inclusive society became stronger. There was a commitment to the development of democratic values of liberty, equality and civil rights that contributed to the growth of an inclusive society where diversity is celebrated and equal opportunity is a priority (Engelbrecht, 1999).

Thus an understanding of the wider context of inclusion in society and in the political arena in South Africa is the starting point to understand the developments in education and the move to inclusive education. What is implied is that in the field of education specifically, schools needed to be a reflection of the new society and be part of the process of redressing past inequalities.

South Africa's move towards more inclusive forms of education was also in keeping with global trends in educational reform. Greater efforts were made to implement approaches that could identify barriers to learning and development and to provide all children with equal access to quality education (Prinsloo, 2001). The completion of policy development by the National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) at the end of 1997 constituted the first phase of moving toward an inclusive education system (Naicker, 1999).

Naicker (1999) reports that in 1996 the new Department of Education appointed the NCSNET / NCESS to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa. The key barriers to learning that were identified by the Commission were seen as most critical for those who had been previously marginalised in society. Based on the findings of the Commission inclusive education was conceptualised as the need for a single education and training system that offered a range of learning contexts, varied and flexible curriculum and support interventions to address the needs of the learner population. Further, it envisaged the development of a community-based support system to enhance the capacity of all aspects of the system. The recommendations also asserted the necessity for inter-sectoral collaboration of all role players involved in providing support to centres of learning that could ensure a range of options for the provision of education for all.



The vision of support services embraced the inclusion of a variety of professionals that would be able to support teachers and learners best. These included specific educational personnel within the department, Non-Government-Organisations, lay people in the community such as parents, and even teachers with specialised competency, all of whom would be trained over a ten-year period (Naicker, 1999; Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001).

Thus, as with all levels and forms of education in South Africa, teachers received particular attention of policy makers in recent years (Robinson, 2003). The Education White Paper Number 6 on “Building an Inclusive Education and Training System” (2001) maintains that the professional development of teachers is a priority for the Department of Education. In view of the fact that education support services as they existed in the past in South Africa were minimally effective, policy regarding teacher support makes it clear that the development of effective education support services is seen as pivotal in helping teachers specifically with the process of curriculum change within an inclusive education system. What is also significant is that these services are called upon to support teachers in meeting the demands of not only their learners’ special needs, but also addressing their social problems (Lazarus and Donald, 1995).

Many teachers and officials are concerned that schools and other learning sites in South Africa are not equipped to handle an inclusive education system. The reality of providing for inclusion in schools is without a doubt a complex issue. What is clear is that inclusion in education has in recent years brought about increasing demands for schools to provide equality of opportunity for all learners and it is obvious that there will be learners who would require more intensive and specialised support to accommodate their learning needs. As a result, a system of inclusive education in South Africa needs to provide a range of levels of support for both learners and teachers.

Teachers are the key agents in any schooling system, and therefore the reconstruction of education requires the prioritising of professional development and support for teachers. Policy makers increasingly recognise this, yet despite this general acceptance research (Donald, Lazarus, and Lolwana, 1997; Guskey, 2002) consistently points out the ineffectiveness of such support services or programmes. Specifically in South Africa, black teachers have struggled

against incredible odds to maintain a semblance of education during the apartheid years. Historically, education support services in South Africa have been racially segregated, unequal, inconsistent, biased and minimally effective. According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997), such a history of educational deprivation has been so great that a sense of hopelessness and demoralisation has set in among teachers. It is thus clear that developing effective and appropriate support services for teachers will be vital in assisting the process of educational reform.

In 2002 the National Department of Education in South Africa drew up a policy regarding teacher support that committed itself to the strengthening of education support services in South Africa. It was viewed as the key to reducing barriers to learning within education and training. An awareness of the policy assertions is crucial in order to be aware of the specific needs for support that are pivotal in helping South Africa's transition to an inclusive education system.

#### 2.1.4. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

As education support services in South Africa existed in the past, they were minimally effective. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997) highlight many reasons for this ineffectiveness. First, South Africa's education system has a history of gross inequality and inconsistency between different racially segregated departments and between rural and urban contexts. Second, there was a lack of professional coherence between components of the education support services whereby there was no sense of national clarity on the composition and goals of these services. An undemocratic and prejudicial decision-making process with regard to funding and provision of special needs and services was also evident under the previous apartheid government. Another problem was education support services' almost total neglect of the social difficulties of the majority of the country.

In restructuring support within inclusive education it was thus clear that these issues needed to be addressed. One model attempted to meet this demand, and was proposed by Lazarus and Donald in 1995. Many of the features of this model appear to have been adopted by the national Department of Education (2002), and are now currently reflected in broad policy terms.

The principles of supporting education and training are framed by the country's constitution. It focuses on human rights and social justice for all learners. It anticipates the redressing of past inequalities by providing equal access for all learners to a single inclusive education system and creating optimal participation and social integration of all learners. It intends to ensure access of all learners to the curriculum, which implies the opportunity to engage meaningfully with the teaching process. Furthermore, it seeks to encourage sensitivity to and the involvement of the community as active stakeholders within education.

In terms of its composition, the core education support service providers are envisioned as needing to include specialist personnel employed by the Department. Such personnel include psychologists, therapists, learning support specialists, health and welfare professionals and so forth. Support services intend to involve curriculum specialists who can provide teachers with direct support, as well as management development specialists who can render support for the education institution. Administrative experts are also noted as needing to be involved in supporting the administrative and financial management within the institutions.

Support services within inclusive education in South Africa are therefore envisaged to provide co-ordinated professional support service for all education institutions. Through supporting teaching, learning and management, support is thus determined to help the capacity of educational institutions to accommodate a range of diverse learning needs. One of their key foci is to provide indirect support for learners by supporting teachers. Supporting teachers advocates helping teachers to create greater flexibility in their teaching methods in order to accommodate all learners.

In summary, many international changes in education have occurred over the past few decades that have had a significant impact on the national reform of education in South Africa. South Africa's education system is undergoing a gradual restructuring to create a system that can meet the educational needs of all learners and provide the opportunity for all children to learn in an integrated context. However, the successful implementation of an inclusive education system will be driven or hampered by the competence of the teachers within our schools. Teachers are viewed as the key agents for such educational change. It is therefore critical that government,

policy-makers, and training institutions, are made aware of the doubts, concerns, and needs of teachers. The present study intends to investigate the difficulties that teachers are faced with daily, and identify what it may be that teachers' specifically need to equip and motivate themselves to accommodate learner diversity within their classrooms.

## 2.2. TEACHERS WITHIN THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

According to Hughes, Schumm and Vaughn (1996), many teachers do not have a clear understanding of what inclusion is. They do not hold a strong theoretical understanding of the move to inclusion and further, are uncertain about how it may affect their roles and responsibilities. In their research, they point out that teachers are concerned about how they are going to meet the needs of learners with severe or specific difficulties in the mainstream classroom. The majority of teachers do not have the experience of working with such learners, and thus do not have the confidence to teach in this new situation. Moreover, teachers who have never been taught in inclusion programmes have a difficult time envisioning how to implement practices to meet the needs of all the learners in their class. Such studies are essential when looking at how we define and evaluate inclusive education in practice. According to Corbett (2001), some of the key issues involve that of teachers' attitudes, the demands to increase their teaching repertoire, and their feelings of inadequacy when they are unable to do so.

A limited number of studies (Davies, 1995; Choles, 1997; Christie, 1998; Davies and Green, 1998; Forbay, 1999; Bothma, Gravett and Swart, 2000; Gordon, 2000; Hay, Smit and Paulsen, 2001; Swart & Pettipher, 2002) on the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion have been conducted in South Africa, but very little attention has been given to considering the needs of teachers within this system of transformation. If teachers are considered to be crucial mediators of change, then providing an awareness of their needs and experiences in the classroom is vital if educational reform is to succeed (Chundra, 1997).

Lomofsky, Roberts and Mvambi (1999) state that since teachers are the people who make learning possible, their own feelings and attitudes with regard to what is happening in the classroom is of great significance. To support the successful inclusion of learners, teachers have to be sensitive not only to the particular needs of their learners but also to their own feelings and

attitudes. The following section looks at the impact that teacher attitudes have on the successful implementation of an inclusive policy within schools.

### 2.2.1. TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSION

A number of researchers (Davies, 1995; Choles, 1997; Christie, 1998; Davies and Green, 1998; Forbay, 1999; Bothma, Gravett and Swart, 2000; Gordon, 2000; Swart and Pettipher, 2002) report that the attitude of teachers towards the implementation of inclusion is one of the most important factors influencing the success of an inclusive education system, since attitudes can affect peoples' behaviours, actions, and efficiency. From this it would follow that attitudes and perceptions that teachers hold toward inclusion may then greatly influence school learning environments and the availability of equitable educational opportunities for all students.

Jobe, Rust and Brissie (1996) state that much research has been done to ascertain whether teacher attitude is one of the most important variables in determining the success of any kind of innovative programmes in education. With regard to accommodating all learners' needs within an inclusive setting, this finding holds particular value. Under the umbrella of inclusive education, contemporary teachers are required to take on new roles to provide inclusive education programmes to better meet the educational needs of all learners, especially those at risk of school failure. Teachers are required not only to teach diverse populations but are also expected to assume responsibility for the achievement of all learners assigned to their classrooms. The degree to which schools offer effective inclusive education then, may depend to a large extent on the attitudes that teachers hold regarding their abilities to meet these requirements, as well as the support they receive in accomplishing their professional objective (Reusen, Shoho and Barker, 2001).

Research conducted by Smith-Davis (2003) on teacher attitudes indicates that while many teachers may philosophically support the concepts of mainstreaming and inclusion, most have strong concerns about their ability to implement these programmes successfully. For instance, Semmel, Abernathy, Butera and Lesar (1991) have shown that even after completing staff development training teachers still tend to question their ability to teach within an inclusive

classroom mostly due to their concern regarding inadequate and insufficient support and resources that are necessary for them to feel more competent.

Avramidis and Norwich (2002) reviewed a range of research (conducted prior to 2001) that examined teachers' attitudes towards integration and inclusion within schools. Their findings identified a host of factors that appear to affect teacher acceptance of the inclusion principle and coping within the inclusive classroom. In their study the single most influential issue on teachers' attitudes was the availability of human and physical support. Jobe, Rust and Brissie (1996) draw a similar conclusion in their review of past research addressing the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion. Their findings emphasise that teachers with greater inclusion in-service training and support showed more positive attitudes towards inclusion than those teachers without such training and support. From the literature reviewed it is evident that the availability of support services significantly contributes to teachers' attitudes to inclusion and is thus seen as vital to the success of mainstreaming (Silver, 1991).

The following section looks specifically at teachers' need for support in dealing with the changes and demands of implementing an inclusive education policy.

## 2.2.2. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF NEEDING SUPPORT

### 2.2.2.1 Areas of Need

Clarity about teachers' own needs and strengths is seen as a necessary step in preparing teachers for inclusion. Werts, Wolery, Snyder and Caldwell (1996, p.20) argue that three areas of support are vital: "(1) training that is responsive to the individual needs of teachers, (2) consultation from a team of professionals who have varying types of expertise, and (3) additional in-class help for actually carrying out the classroom duties and responsibilities". Semmel, *et al*, (1991) found that teachers also expressed a need for smaller classes, additional time for consultation and planning, extra learning materials, and administrative support to cope with paperwork. Class size was one of the most frequently mentioned problems that teachers believed to hinder successful inclusion. In both the abovementioned research studies the majority of the teachers felt that although they needed more preparation time to cope with meeting diverse learning needs, even contact time with their learners was far from adequate.

Reusen, Shoho and Barker (2001) report that the study conducted by Scruggs and Mastropieri in 1996, based on high school teachers' perceptions, is one of the most extensive reviews and syntheses of the literature on inclusive classroom teacher perceptions. Within this study, it was consistently found that teachers reported needing much additional support with regard to the implementation of inclusive practices within their classroom. The needs for additional support were identified as including additional time, in-service training, consultation with special education teachers and other professionals in their classrooms (for example, psychologists, and speech and language therapists), and extra curriculum materials and equipment.

#### 2.2.2.2 Support Teams

Scruggs and Mastropieri also determined that most teachers supported inclusion on condition that adequate funding, appropriate legislation, and collaborative support from administrators, parents, educational professionals, and the community accompanied the move to an inclusive system. This implied that levels of support were perceived as needing to increase in relation to the increased demands that were placed on teachers when managing a diverse range of individual learning needs within a single classroom (Christie, 1998).

The practicalities of adapting classrooms to accommodate the learning needs of all learners have been left mostly up to the class teacher. Teachers need to deal with complex dilemmas in the process of delivering the curriculum to the diverse needs of their learners. To support teachers' teaching methods Gordon (2000) describes the development of collaborative relationships among teachers so that their expertise can be shared. Collaborative functions include sharing information, collaborative planning, and joint responsibility and accountability. There is a need to conceptualise and understand learner's needs and classroom difficulties, defining realistic goals, problem solving, and brainstorming intervention techniques and effectiveness. Such a support team could consist of teachers in the school, parents, and special education teachers that could use their collaborative expertise to solve problems and meet the needs of accommodating learner diversity. District based support teams are then seen as formally supporting teachers through training and curriculum development (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 1997; Belknap, Roberts and Nyewe, 1999; Lazarus, Daniels and Engelbrecht, 1999).

In another study, Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher and Saumell (1996) found that teachers in the USA felt strongly that extra resources are important elements to ensure the success of mainstreaming. Such resources included extra, professional staff that was available on site to assist in addressing and managing learners with differing learning needs (Christie, 1998).

#### 2.2.2.3 Training

Kyriacou (2001) maintains that the necessity of training teachers to think and work in a new frame of reference is perceived as perhaps the greatest problem facing educational change. Teachers are uncertain and confused as a result of the number of sweeping changes that have transformed their working environment. According to Guskey (2002), teacher training needs to include conceptualising and accommodating diverse learning styles and needs, as a core component if teachers are to accept the responsibility for such learners within their classrooms. Further, teachers need to be helped to identify and communicate their training needs and given the opportunities for those needs to be met.

Certain studies (Choles, 1997; Hay, Smit and Paulsen, 2001) show that teachers are not familiar with the principles of outcomes based education, and they find it difficult to obtain resources or learning materials that are relevant to every child's culture and level of development (Gordon, 2001; Prinsloo, 2001). Teachers struggle to obtain parental and community participation within the educational setting. They also feel that training programmes intended to deal with the vast diversity amongst the large number of learners in their classrooms are inadequate (Christie, 1998; Davies and Green, 1998; Gordon, 2000; Prinsloo, 2001). Teachers also lack self-respect because they are seen as lazy (Prinsloo, 2001). In addition, in spite of the Department of Education's attempt to train and support them, teachers still experience feelings of powerlessness and inferiority that cause them to lack motivation and enthusiasm to meet the needs of all the learners in their classroom (Prinsloo, 2001).

Prinsloo (2001) asserts that it has been accepted internationally that in order to empower teachers to steer educational change, teachers need to be supported in the transformation process. Teachers need to be trained in pre- and in- service programmes to identify and manage diversity within the classroom. Special schools with their trained and experienced staff need to assist and



support teachers in mainstream schools so as to ensure that mainstream teachers feel competent enough to support all their learners in order for them to learn optimally. This implies that within the South African context specifically, the need of all teachers for training and support must not only be understood but also met via policy implementation and practice. However, in a developing country such as ours (characterised by high unemployment, an unstable economy, and poverty) it can be expected that providing quality education for all learners could be a daunting task.

### 2.3. TEACHER STRESS

Stress amongst teachers has been extensively researched (Kyriacou, 2001; Forlin, 2001). Within the field of psychology, researchers have used many varying definitions of stress depending on the theoretical framework they choose to adopt. From a cognitive-mediational perspective, teacher stress may be defined as “an alteration of psychological homeostasis resulting from aspects of the teacher’s job that are perceived as threats to an individuals well-being or self esteem” (Moracco and McFadden in Rigby, Bennet and Boshoff, 1996). For the purposes of this research study however, the definition adopted by Kyriacou and Sutcliff in 1978 (in Kyriacou, 2001) is used. This definition is viewed as being more in line with other definitions most widely used by other researchers. Teacher stress is defined as a teacher’s response of unpleasant negative emotions (such as anger, depression, anxiety, or frustration) that results from aspects of the teacher’s work.

Kyriacou (2001) offers a review of international data that indicates that teaching is identified as one of the high stress professions. According to Rigby, Bennet and Boshoff (1996), occupational stress for teachers is particularly significant since it has escalating negative effects on the mental health of the individual teacher, the quality of education they are able to provide, and their learners.

In another international review of the literature on teacher stress reported by Chen and Miller in 1997 (in Forlin, 2001), the stressors that are commonly experienced by teachers are highlighted and categorised. First, the specific administrative stressors of workload, time management, role ambiguity and role conflict, were reported as most frequently interfering with a teacher’s

instruction time and therefore most stressful. The increasing amounts of paperwork and extra curricular demands that related to insufficient planning time reportedly increased teacher stress levels. The excessive amount of time needed to prepare for individual student needs and prioritising the allocation of their time to be spent with either one or two children with special needs or with the majority of the class, was considered to be a major problem for teachers that induced high levels of stress. Secondly, classroom stressors for teachers were identified as including the lack of teaching resources, class size, and lack of student discipline. In the third category, a lack of appropriate professional training was cited as a significant stressor for teachers particularly within the studies investigating teacher stress within inclusive schools. High levels of teacher stress were reported when teachers were required to implement new practices with inadequate ongoing training and without the necessary organisational resources.

South African education with its changes since 1994 in policy and practice has consequently led to teachers needing to adapt to a new reality. In their research study, van Zyl and Pietersen (1994) state that South African teachers experience high levels of stress due to the changes in the structure of teaching. They assert that in South Africa the changes in education that have resulted in the new structures of teaching (namely, the new curriculum, new methods of assessment, new learning materials, etcetera) are viewed as the most important contributing factors to high levels of stress amongst South African teachers. Other causes of teachers stress found in another study (van der Linde, van der Westhuizen and Wissing, 1999) includes work overload, unsatisfactory classroom climate, low decision making powers, little support from colleagues, problems with disruptive learners, and a lack of management sensitivity and support in the school. Van Zyl and Pietersen (1994) further conclude that an atmosphere of inadequate autonomy, inadequate recognition and support for what is being accomplished, and rigid work schedules lead to high levels of stress and invariably a lack of job satisfaction and poor productivity. The above research studies are also significant in that the findings regarding causes of teacher stress mirror that which is affirmed within psychological research globally, as discussed.

In summary, recent international trends have advocated a move towards a policy for “equal education for all”. Education in South Africa is part of this process undergoing fundamental change (Engelbrecht, 1999). Educational reform both globally and locally involves a shift that

entails including and meeting the needs of those who were previously excluded not only on the basis of language, culture, and race, but also emotional, economic, cognitive, and physical difficulties.

This chapter presents an overview of the literature available on teachers within the inclusive education setting. The literature reviewed has revealed that inadequate training and support for teachers is related to their negative attitudes towards inclusive education and their feelings of inadequacy in managing learner diversity within the classroom. On the other hand, the literature also highlights that increasing support and training for teachers results in a more positive attitude towards inclusion. What is emphasised in the literature and affirmed by Choles (1997) is that the success of inclusion seems to be reliant on three main factors: increasing teachers' sense of competence, providing support services, and changing teachers' attitudes.

What research has shown is that teachers are the key role players in determining the quality of the implementation of any new education policy. According to research (Dyson and Forlin, 1999; Hay, Smit and Paulsen, 2001) there have been many cases internationally in which changes in education have failed because insufficient attention was given to the needs and practices of those who are expected to put changes into effect. In South Africa, implementing a new policy such as inclusive education suggests that the current needs and practices of teachers require serious consideration in ensuring successful educational change (Hay, Smit and Paulsen, 2001).

To date, limited studies investigating teachers' perceptions, competence and needs within an inclusive setting have been completed in the South African context, but research regarding this matter is insufficient (van der Merwe, 1997; du Preez, 1998; Malatji, 1999). This study attempts to provide some insight into this area. It argues that without addressing what it is that teachers feel they must have in order to effectively manage diversity in the classroom, the future success of the implementation of an inclusive education policy is greatly hampered.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the methodology used within the current research study. It begins by describing the aims and methods used for investigation.

### **3.1. AIM**

#### **3.1.1. SPECIFIC AIMS**

- a) To examine teachers' perceptions of what they need in order to be effective within their classrooms.
- b) To explore teachers' perceptions of their competency in managing diversity within their classrooms.
- c) To investigate teachers' perceptions of support services with regard to in-service training programmes, district based support teams, school based support teams, and within school resources (namely human support and material support).

### **3.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions are investigated:

1. What do teachers feel they need in order to improve their effectiveness in the classroom?
2.
  - 2.1 Do teachers feel skilled to identify the specific individual learning needs of the learners within their class?
  - 2.2 Do teachers feel skilled to support the specific individual learning needs of the learners within their class?
3. In terms of support:
  - 3.1 do teachers feel that the in-service training programmes provided by the GDE is adequate / effective?
  - 3.2 what do teachers believe to be the role of district based support teams?
  - 3.3 how much do teachers know about their school based support teams?
  - 3.4 do teachers feel supported in their schools?

### 3.3. SAMPLE

The sample consists of eighteen Foundation Phase (Grade 1-Grade 3) teachers who volunteered to participate in the research study. Teachers from the Foundation Phase were specifically focussed on, as this is the phase of education in which early identification of learning difficulties occurs. The criteria for selecting subjects was that they had to be qualified within the primary education field and have at least 1 years teaching experience within the Foundation Phase. Due to their training and theoretical knowledge, as well as their experiential knowledge, these subjects were seen as the best representatives of this specific teaching population. The majority of the educators spoke English as their first language, however all the participants were fluent in this medium. In the sample of eighteen teachers, all of the participants that volunteered were female. In the schools selected there was only one male teacher within the Foundation Phase who declined to participate in the study. Descriptive statistics for the sample are presented in chapter four.

The participants are all qualified educators based in township mainstream primary schools that were characteristically historically disadvantaged. These schools were selected since they have not received adequate education support services in the past (pre-1994). The schools are classified as dual medium of instruction (English and Afrikaans), co-ed schools that share similar socio-economic backgrounds.

### 3.4. PROCEDURE

- (i) A guided interview was designed to investigate the needs of teachers within their inclusive classroom. See Appendix II.
- (ii) Permission to conduct the study was gained verbally from the GDE research officials.
- (iii) The principals of the schools selected for the sample were approached to determine whether they were willing to allow their teachers to participate in the study. A copy of the letter seeking permission for the study is contained in Appendix III.
- (iv) Once permission was obtained from the principals, a meeting was held with the Foundation Phase teachers in each of the schools. In this meeting an overview of the research study was presented to the teachers. Request for participation in the study was

strictly on a volunteer basis. Dates and times were scheduled with each volunteer participant for the interview.

- (v) Participants were requested to sign consent forms granting permission to use the confidential results from the measure. See Appendix IV.
- (vi) Each of the subjects was interviewed individually at the negotiated time, after teaching time with their learners. Each interview lasted for 45 minutes. The participants first filled in their biographical information and completed the Likert-Type scale, after which the open-ended questions were asked verbally and tape-recorded.
- (vii) Once all the data was collected it was analysed. The information obtained was confidential. For each interview, the subjects were assigned a code so as to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

### 3.5. THE MEASURE

A multi-method measurement procedure (a Likert-Type scale and guided interview) was used, which is considered to be ethically necessary and an accurate safeguard against biases inherent in a research study (Antaki, 1981). The interview included 3 sections:

The first section of the interview dealt with biographical information on each of the participants. These categories identified each participant's gender, age, home language, qualifications, position held at the school, teaching experience (as reflected by the number of years taught), the affiliation to their school based support team, and their participation in in-service training.

The second section of the interview assessed the feelings of competence and perceptions of the participants in terms of their inclusive education practices within their classrooms. To complement data collected qualitatively, a Likert-Type scale was administered in this section. The questions in the Likert-Type scale addressed educators' perceived competence in dealing with learners who experience difficulties. Furthermore, it afforded information regarding the knowledge and skills educators have acquired through the attendance of in-service training programmes. The 5 point Likert-Type scale over twenty-six items was developed to determine teachers' perceptions regarding their ability to manage learner diversity, and of the support and training resources available to them. This section consisted of items that the participants rated using the range "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". For example,

Item		1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Unsure	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
15	I am able to provide my learners with the support they need					

The third and final section presented with open-ended questions so as to allow for unique responses for each subject, as well as further comment and explanation on the specific needs that participants face at the ‘chalk face’.

The guided interview is a qualitative measure that provided the educators an opportunity to voice the challenges they face on the basis of their knowledge and experience of learners with diverse learning needs. The interview questions yielded information about the educators’ needs in order to offer effective teaching practices within their classroom. It also provided a profile of the support available to the educators within the school setting.

### 3.6. RESEARCH DESIGN

Since it was the intention of the current research study to explore the teachers’ perceptions with regards to issues they feel are necessary for inclusive education to be successful, a qualitative approach appeared to be the appropriate strategy. Qualitative research design aims at understanding experience as it is “lived” or “felt” (Sherman and Webb, 1988). Naturalistic researchers believe that gaining knowledge from sources that have “intimate familiarity” with an issue is far better than the objective distancing approach that characterises quantitative approaches (Haworth, 1984).

This qualitative research design was contextual in nature since it focused on a specific educational context that identified the perceptions of foundation phase teachers in schools located in a township area. It draws on an inductive process in which themes and categories emerge through the analysis of data collected.

### 3.7. DATA ANALYSIS

Content analysis was used to analyse the data. Krippendorff (1980) defines content analysis as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories. Although researchers often use content analysis procedure in qualitative research studies (whereby recurrent themes and categories are developed, content coded, and category counts are conducted), in the current study both methods of content analysis (quantitatively and qualitatively) were used. This was done because it was deemed essential for the results to not only present emerging themes but also to present the severity of the emerging themes as felt by the participants.

The data obtained from each participant was analysed separately and thereafter a general integrated analysis was completed. For analysis of the descriptive statistics, SAS, a statistical package for the mainframe was used. Initial descriptive statistics were conducted to describe the sample. Further descriptive statistics were employed to describe and compare the responses of the teachers (Likert-Type scale) with those from the qualitative instrument. Before responses from the Likert-Type scale could be analysed, all items that were negatively phrased were reversed in this instrument so that they could flow towards the same direction. Furthermore, the rating scale was also reversed, for example, “strongly disagree” was changed to 1, “disagree” to 2, “agree” to 4 and “strongly agree” to 5. Only the “unsure” rating did not change. With this reversal, any score above 2.5 is thus considered to be a positive response whereas a score below 2.5 is considered to be a negative response.

Content analysis of the data enabled the researcher to explore themes as they emerged. Common trends in the data were sought. The researcher attached labels to observed recurring events, an approach commonly known as analyst-constructed categories (Matocha, 1992). In order to increase the validity and reliability of the results, data was analysed by reading and rereading of the guided interview, assigning codes to portions of the data and identifying emerging themes (Maxwell, 1992). This process ended when the researcher reached theoretical saturation, which is the point at which no new themes emerge (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).



## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS**

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section deals with descriptive statistics for the sample. The second section presents the statistical data of responses to the Likert-Type scale questions. The third section provides an analysis of the qualitative data gathered.

### **4.1. DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS**

#### **4.1.1. The Sample**

The composition of the biographical details of the sample, i.e. gender, age, home language, training, and position held at the schools are reflected in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Biographical information of the sample**

<b>Gender</b>		<b>Age</b>		<b>Home Language</b>		<b>Training</b>		<b>Position Held</b>	
<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>
Male	0	26-29	2	English	13	Degree	9	HOD	2
Female	18	30-34	1	Xhosa	1	Diploma	4	Teacher	16
		35-39	3	Tswana	2	Grade 12	1		
		40-44	2	Tsonga	1	Grade 11	1		
		45-49	4	Gujarati	1	Grade 8	2		
		50-55	4						
		56+	2						

All the teachers that volunteered to participate in the study are female. The majority of teachers, i.e. eight of the eighteen participants, fall within the 45-55 year old range. Thirteen of the eighteen teachers' home language is English. Thirteen teachers have obtained a tertiary level teaching qualification. Two of the teachers interviewed held positions as heads of the department (i.e. of the foundation phase).

The sample, as described in Table 2, indicates that the majority of the teachers are not members of the school based support team. The experience of the teachers as reflected by the number of years that they have taught, ranges from 1 year (1 teacher) to over 10 years (12 teachers). The teachers have been involved in a number of different in-service training programmes, the majority attending training programmes on the Revised New Curriculum Statement.

**Table 2: Description of the sample**

<b>SBST Member</b>		<b>Teaching Experience</b>		<b>In-service Training</b>	
<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>
Yes	7	0-2 years	1	RNCS	12
No	11	6-8 years	3	OBE	6
		8-10 years	2	Reading	7
		10+ years	12	Inclusive education	1
				ADD	2
				HOD	2
				SGB	1

(SBST: School Based Support Team

RNCS : Revised New Curriculum Statement

OBE : Outcomes Based Education

ADD : Attention Deficit Disorder

HOD : Head Of Department

SGB : School Governing Body)

#### 4.2. THE LIKERT-TYPE SCALE

The tables below present the Mean and Standard Deviation (STD) with regards to the responses of the participants. As discussed in Chapter Three, due to the reversal of negatively phrased statements, a response of 2.5 or more indicates a positive response on the part of the participant.

**Table 3: Teachers' feelings of competence in their ability to identify and understand the specific individual learning needs of learners.**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>
6	I know how to identify "at risk" learners	18	3.3	1.1
19	I find it very difficult to identify learners who are "at risk"	17	3.4	1.3
1	I understand what my learners need	18	3.9	1.3
22	I struggle to understand the specific needs of my learners	15	3.8	0.5

Table 3 comprises 4 items that assess the teachers' feelings of competence in being able to identify and understand the individual needs of their learners. Results suggest that the participants felt that they were capable of recognising the needs of learners who require additional assistance in learning.

**Table 4: Teachers' feelings of competence in being able to adequately support the specific individual learning needs of the learners within their class.**

Item	Question	N	Mean	STD
12	I am able to provide my learners with the support they need	17	3.5	0.9
17	I cannot provide my learners with the support they need	17	3.2	1.1

From the results presented in Table 4, it is deduced that seventeen of the eighteen teachers feel positively that they are able to provide appropriate support to accommodate the specific needs of their learners.

**Table 5: The effectiveness of School Based Support Teams (SBST)**

Item	Question	N	Mean	STD
11	Our school based support team is ineffective	18	3.3	0.9
20	Our school based support team is effective	16	3.8	0.9

In the items assessing the effectiveness of school based support teams, the results indicate that the majority of the teachers were impressed and felt positively about their school based support team.

**Table 6: Teachers' evaluation of the effectiveness of the in-service training programmes provided by the GDE.**

Item	Question	N	Mean	STD
5	I am able to implement what I have learnt through in-service training	18	3.6	1.1
13	I struggle to implement the ideas offered in in-service training	18	3.6	1.0
10	In-service training has been useful / helpful	18	3.3	1.2
15	In-service training has not taught me anything new	18	3.5	1.1

In Table 6, positive responses are presented with regards to the effectiveness of in-service training programmes offered by the GDE. Results suggest that the respondents feel that in-service training programmes are very useful and helpful for them. All of the teachers feel that the in-service training is effective in training them in areas that they do not have knowledge of. Moreover, they feel capable of implementing what they learn through in-service training in their classrooms.

**Table 7: Teachers' perceptions of support within their school.**

Item	Question	N	Mean	STD
4	I feel unsupported	17	3.4	1.1
16	There are people I can turn to for help	17	3.7	0.9
7	I prefer working on my own	18	2.5	1.1
18	I prefer working with others	17	3.7	1.3

The items in Table 7 assess teachers' perceptions of being supported within their school. Seventeen of the teachers felt that they are supported and that there are other support mechanisms that they are able to utilise. These teachers indicated that there are other people in their schools that they can turn to for assistance and the result from Item 18 proposes that they also prefer to work with others collaboratively. Based on the neutrality of the response to item 10 however, an assumption can be made that although teachers are capable of managing their workload on their own they appear to not favour working in isolation.

#### **4.3. QUALITATIVE RESULTS**

The common feelings expressed by teachers are presented below. The responses of the teachers were categorised according to the research questions. These responses are presented below with some examples (for a more detailed presentation of the teachers' responses see Appendix V).

##### **4.3.1. Research Question: what do teachers feel they need in order to improve their effectiveness in the classroom?**

**Interview question: What do you feel you need in order to be an effective teacher in the classroom?**

Of the eighteen participants, ten mentioned that specialist staff (namely remedially trained teachers or psychologists) should be employed to assist with learners that have special educational needs since teachers cannot always attend to them on a one-to-one basis. They felt strongly that in this way more individual attention could be given to all learners in the classroom.

*"We don't have the training to detect learners with learning problems. It is difficult to ascertain whether it's a real cognitive problem or an emotional problem because it's not our field of expertise".*

Nine participants stated that sufficient learning materials be made available for all learners in the class. They felt strongly that sharing material is often unsuccessful because of the differing paces at which children work.

*“We need more resources, textbooks and learning materials to accommodate the large number of children in a single class. Sharing between children doesn’t work because of their different work paces”.*

*“... when we have to share learning materials. It can be very disruptive for other children when their partners work slower or have poor concentration, which distracts them from their work because they have to share”.*

Nine participants indicated that the classrooms were too small and inadequate in accommodating the large number of children in the class (+40).

*“The classroom roles are too big. We have 40 in a class and sometimes it’s impossible to see each child individually and give them that attention in every learning area”*

*“There are too many children in a class to cope with”.*

*“We are overloaded with too many children in a class and so we cannot devote the time we need to learners with special needs”.*

*“We definitely need bigger classroom space. I mean the actual size of our classrooms is too small. These rooms were not built to seat 50 children. It was built under the old government when we had only 20 children in a class. If we cannot have bigger classrooms then there must be smaller numbers of children in a class. Now we have become like lecturers. We lecture to so many faces each day and there is no or maybe very little individual attention given”.*

One teacher reported the need for a translator in her classroom in order to address the diverse language needs of the children she teaches.

*“Some of the learners have to have a translator because of the language barriers. I need interpreters to help the other African language mother tongue speakers because it is an area that I am not able to address or help them in. There are a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Zulu, Tswana, Xhosa, Venda) within my class and we don’t always have someone in class who can translate for us”.*

Four participants were unhappy with the attitude of the parents. They expressed that most parents are uninterested in their children's education and there is no involvement or encouragement in their children's learning.

*“Even when they promise to check their children's work or to consult when we request them to they do not stick to their word”.*

*“Learning is seen as the teacher's responsibility, parents don't want to get involved”.*

Another theme that evolved was that teachers felt that training programmes were quite repetitive and not focussed on different areas of need. Instead, the participants identified areas of training that could be more beneficial for them in coping with diverse needs of learners. Five participants mentioned the need for proper class management techniques and structure that could guide them as teachers. These teachers stated that it was also important to have a good relationship with learners to aid the learning process, and to be adequately prepared before each lesson.

*“We must have a good relationship with both learners and other educators in our working environment. We must have well-planned lessons that maintain the learners interests”.*

Two participants stated that in order to present effective teaching methods in the classroom there needs to be greater consistency within the curriculum programme set out by the Department of Education.

*“Now the material is helpful because we can adjust it how we like to, but I need more structure and less changes so that we know exactly what to follow when we teach”.*

#### 4.3.2. Research Question: What do teachers believe to be the role of district based support teams?

**Interview question: What do you see the role of district based support teams (DBST) as encompassing?**

Ten teachers felt that the district based support team needs to function as a support for teachers by:

- getting parents more involved within their children's learning and development. By influencing parents to play a larger role as a recognised and valued stakeholder in the education system.

- decreasing the number of learners in a class in order to improve the teacher-learner ratio.
- coming into the classroom and demonstrating methods of working with weaker learners and meeting diverse needs.

Nine teachers further stated that DBST need to be directly involved in the observation and monitoring of teaching. They suggested that DBST need to:

- work collaboratively with teachers. Becoming more involved in teaching methods not from a distance through paperwork and workshops, but practically in the classroom.
- make regular visits to classrooms on an advisory capacity, guiding teachers and not simply to pick out mistakes.
- come to schools in order to recognise and understand teachers' needs. In this way they will be able to develop in-service training programmes and provide learning materials that meet teachers' needs within the classroom directly.

Seven teachers responded that the DBST is responsible for designing administrative paperwork and that such paperwork needs to be minimised so as to ensure that teachers have more teaching contact time with their learners.

*"... In minimising the paperwork ...they need to cut out repetitive forms ... and information that wastes time".*

Five respondents expressed that they see one of the roles of DBST as providing schools with trained specialists within the field of education. Such an ongoing collaborative working relationship could assist them with supporting learners with specific needs in their schools.

*"They need to provide us with a district psychologist who is available for us to consult with regularly".*

*"We need to receive more assistance from consulting educational psychologists that offer their services to the school ... when dealing with assessments".*

One teacher felt that the DBST is responsible for the formation and effective functioning of the school based support teams.

Lastly, three participants felt strongly that the DBST did not have any significant role or function in supporting teachers.

*“They have no idea of what we experience in the classroom”.*

*“They need to give teachers more power to make decisions because we know our learners best. They do not know our learners”.*

#### 4.3.3. Research Question: How much do teachers know about the services of their school based support teams?

##### **Interview question: How much do you know about your school’s school based support team?**

Seven teachers were actual members of the school based support team (SBST). Of the eighteen participants, the eleven teachers who were not members of the SBST knew nothing about their SBST except for its existence. The seven teachers who were members of the SBST mentioned that their SBST comprised of a few members from all the teaching phases, and focussed only on supporting learners with learning difficulties. One teacher stated that she knew about the home visits that the SBST did for children who were particularly struggling academically. Eight teachers who were not members of their SBST noted that they did not use the services of the SBST but rather sought support from other teachers within the foundation phase.

#### 4.3.4. Research Question: In which way do teachers feel supported within their schools?

Table 8 below presents the responses of the teachers based on frequencies.

**Table 8: Teachers’ perceptions of support within the school environment**

<b>What support do you currently receive as an educator within your school?</b>	
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Help with supporting weaker learners	10
Assistance with discipline problems	7
Guidance in assisting learners with learning problems	5
Assistance with administrative work and with difficult learners	4
In-service training	4



I manage on my own	3
<b>Who provides such support for you?</b>	
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Colleagues	10
Principal and deputy principal	7
School Based Support Team	5
Head Of Department	4
Gauteng Department of Education	3
Local organisations	1
Myself	3

In terms of support that teachers receive within their schools, Table 8 indicates that majority of the teachers felt supported mostly by their fellow staff members and often by teachers within the same grade. The area in which they felt most supported was with receiving assistance in providing support for weaker learners.

The data presented above will be integrated and discussed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION**

This chapter discusses the research findings in relation to the aims that motivated the study. The discussion of the results draws on the literature reviewed and examines the extent to which the present research findings reflect current trends in research. While it is important to understand the results of this study in terms of the literature reviewed, it is significant to point out that since limited South African research has been completed within this specific field, the results of this study have few research findings with which to make comparisons locally. Results from international studies therefore chiefly form the basis for comparison. In addition, this chapter presents the limitations of the present study and recommendations for future research.

### **5.1. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

Qualitative analysis is able to provide insight into certain areas of interest that quantitative statistical analysis is sometimes not able to (Niemann, Niemann, Brazelle, van Staden, Heyns, de Wet, 2000). The open-ended, one-to-one questions of the guided interview allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of the respondents' subjective point of view. Using such a qualitative method of analysis is significant in understanding the participants' personal and individual beliefs that motivate their needs within their classroom, which is not always possible to obtain through the use of a distant quantitative measure (such as a rated scale like the Likert-Type used). Whiteside (1978, cited in Davies and Green, 1998) suggests that teachers' responses to questionnaires that are driven by quantitative data gathering techniques can consist of politically desirable responses. Given the recent political changes in South Africa and the emphasis on the notion of rights, these type of responses then imply that South African teachers may be sensitised to the rights of children and therefore influence their responses to reflect rather politically correct attitudes towards the education system. Within this study this was suggested in the Likert-Type Scale responses that yielded information in contrast to the qualitative responses. Thus, as the results of the present study are discussed, a comparison will be drawn between the responses yielded from the statistical data of the Likert-Type scale questions and those responses from the qualitative data obtained via the open-ended questions. It is believed that drawing such a comparison will allow for greater insight into the nature of the teachers' responses and consequently a better understanding of their perceived needs.

#### 5.1.1. Teacher Needs Within the Classroom

In this study the qualitative results in 4.3.1 indicate that most teachers felt that it is not possible to meet the needs of all the learners given the large number of children they have to attend to within their class.

*“Working with 40 in a class, we can’t help the slow learners. We can’t give them the support they need to help them learn better”.*

*“... reduce class numbers ... smaller numbers in the class means more teaching time and individual attention for each child”.*

The vast majority strongly believed that learners with serious needs must be supported with the aid of additional expertise and programmes. Most of the respondents in this study suggested that trained remedial teachers and other professionals, who could work with the school on a regular basis, could offer such support for the teachers and the specific individual needs of their learners.

*“We also need programmes for helping children with learning problems, how to best help them, and how to teach them differently”.*

*“... we could be trained to help kids emotionally and discuss children who have emotional problems”.*

The need for regular consultancy with psychologists and other expert professionals within the education field was reiterated in the qualitative findings in 4.3.2, when asked to explain their perceived role of the district based support team.

*“They need to provide us with a district psychologist who is available for us to consult with regularly”.*

Moreover, there was an overwhelming recognition of the need for additional resources, namely learning materials such as textbooks and stationery.

*“With resources ... we must improvise, but our learners sometimes can’t even bring stationery to school, so how can they bring other materials from home. It is very demanding for teachers to meet these needs”.*

*“We don’t have enough learning materials and we need actual concrete learning materials, everything from books, to charts, to stationery, to magazines”.*

Teachers were also of the opinion that if all learners were able to use their own learning material it would allow individual learners to work at their own pace and capabilities.

*“We also have limited learning materials which is a hindrance because the learners are forced to share”.*

*“The government needs to provide more resources for each learner so that they don’t have to share textbooks and are able to work at their own pace”.*

These findings are in accordance with the results from a number of studies (Myles and Simpson, 1989; Semmel, *et al*, 1991; Vaughn, *et al*, 1996; Christie, 1998; Reusen, Shoho and Barker, 2001), which ascertain that teachers within the inclusive setting express an urgent need for both human and material resources. These studies also highlight the problem of teachers who are required to deal with large numbers of learners in their class and who are struggling to devote adequate attention and time to all learners.

#### 5.1.2. Teachers’ Perceptions of Competency in Managing Learner Diversity

According to the results of the Likert-Type Scale, as depicted in Tables 3 and 4, teachers were positive that they were capable of identifying learners who were viewed as “at risk”. This implies that they are to some extent aware of learners who are struggling and are in need of additional support. In addition, according to these quantitative results, the majority of the teachers confirmed that they were also able to understand and adequately support the individual needs of these learners. These quantitative results are, however, in conflict with what the participants identified as being a need for effective teaching within the qualitative data. Within the qualitative findings (as presented in 4.3.1 and 4.3.2) the majority of the teachers expressed their need for trained remedial specialists at school to support learners with specific individual needs (as highlighted in 5.1.1), as they did not feel adequately skilled to support these learners on their own. As discussed above, what is suggested in the contradiction of findings is that within the quantitative measure teachers’ produce the expected or correct response. In contrast, the qualitative measure allows them to be more honest and openly express their true feelings of competency in managing learner diversity within their classroom.

The findings yielded from the qualitative data are more in line with another research study (Smith-Davis, 2003). Smith-Davis (2003) asserts that, indeed, most teachers feel that they do lack the skills needed to cope with teaching in the mainstream classroom and meeting the diverse

needs of all learners. This study highlights the fact that teachers require assistance in identifying and addressing learners who have learning difficulties that impact on the learners' ability to learn at the same pace or level as other learners within their class. Further, the research also emphasises the need to develop effective teaching methods for teachers dealing with diverse learner needs.

### 5.1.3. Teachers' Perceptions of Support

#### 5.1.3.1. In-Service Training Programmes

According to the results of the Likert-Type Scale presented in Table 6, all the participants perceive the in-service training programmes to be effective in providing them with new knowledge that they are then able to utilise and implement within their teaching methods.

These findings are however, also in stark contrast to the qualitative results presented in 4.3.1. According to these findings, a common theme within the responses was that teachers felt that the training programmes offered to them were not focussed on different areas of needs but instead were perceived as repetitive. Within the qualitative responses (refer to Appendix V) the teachers expressed that training rarely covered new ground in terms of the curriculum restructure, but often consisted of reviewing and going through the same curriculum changes as they had before. Furthermore, during the open-ended questions the majority of the teachers expressed that training was unhelpful in addressing their difficulties within the classroom.

*“(The district officials) should come into our schools ... to recognise and understand the needs of teachers when it comes to in-service training ... and not just give us what they think we need. The district must really start developing workshops that address our needs exactly and not have workshops based on what they assume our problems might be”.*

The qualitative results, as highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, once again seem to elicit a truer response in terms of the underlying perceptions of support that the teachers have. The qualitative findings are supported by other international studies (Reynolds, 2001; Guskey, 2002) that have shown that even with staff training teachers still tend to question their teaching abilities and methods within the inclusive classroom. Additionally, research trends within South Africa (Christie, 1998; Davies and Green, 1998; Gordon, 2000; Prinsloo, 2001) have indicated that

teachers feel strongly that training is inadequate in assisting the teacher to deal with vast learner diversity in the inclusive setting. In South Africa, the National Department of Education has also recognised the problem with the way in which training is being provided at the moment. Training programmes are not usually developed in an integrated way. Teachers attending such programmes tend to feel overwhelmed and overloaded (since they have to attend so many workshops), and unaware of the way in which the different areas of training connect to one another (Department of Education, 2002).

#### 5.1.3.2. District Based Support Teams (DBST)

An analysis of the themes emerging from the results illustrated in 4.3.2, suggest that the majority of the teachers feel strongly that their district based support team could be contributing more in terms of providing greater support for teachers. This study revealed that there is an overwhelming need for DBST to come into the classroom and become actively involved in monitoring teaching methods and directly assisting learners with specific individual needs.

*“They need to come in and observe the teaching, give us guidance on the lessons ... they can support us by showing us how to work with the learner to address their specific learning problem”.*

*“They can come in ... and demonstrate in our class how to work with and help our weaker learners ... with that child that needs extra support”.*

Participants feel strongly that the DBST could also play a pivotal role in minimising paperwork so as to ensure that teachers are able to devote more time to addressing their learners’ needs. Another significant concern expressed by the teachers is that DBST are unaware of the practical limitations and difficulties that teachers face within their classrooms, and therefore do not presently have an effective role or function in supporting teachers.

*“They need to come into our classrooms and see what our situation is like since integration”.*

*“They have no idea of the problems we experience in the classroom ... the DBST has no function simply because they are not involved in our classrooms at all”.*

*“Outside of compulsory workshops ... they never liase with us as they should. They need to ... talk to us and find out what we struggle with specifically and give us guidance on how to cope and what to do”.*

These findings are paralleled by research elsewhere (Hall, Campher, Smit, Oswald and Engelbrecht, 1999) that has shown that teachers have to deal with complex problems in the process of delivering the curriculum. Teachers are therefore consequently in need of concrete advice on handling difficult situations to enable them to cope. According to this research, many teachers feel that they do not have sufficient training and support to meet many of the challenges they are faced with in their classrooms. The need for an active consultancy and collaborative relationship with district based support teams is consistent with the research findings of Gordon (2000). In this study investigating the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion, Gordon (2000) asserts that the development of collaborative working relationships (with district based support teams for example) could bring about changes in the curriculum and training programmes that in turn could facilitate an overall more positive and supportive educational environment.

#### 5.1.3.3. School Based Support Teams (SBST)

In terms of the descriptive results in Table 5, the findings indicate that the overwhelming majority of the teachers perceive their school based support team as being very effective. This finding is in conflict however, with the qualitative findings presented in 4.3.3. The qualitative data reveals that eleven of the participants (61% of the sample) who are not members of their SBST actually know nothing about their SBST except for its existence. This suggests that SBST do not adequately support teachers within their school since, if individuals are not part of the core team they tend to be excluded largely from the support services that the SBST is intended to provide.

*“They are there but ... they haven’t given us any feedback on meetings ... so I really don’t know what they’ve been doing”*

*“... they haven’t given us any input or help with the slow learners ... we don’t have meetings with them ... everything we do with these children is by our own accord”.*

*“Some of the senior teachers probably don’t even know about the special ed. child in my class which just shows how uninvolved the SBST and the rest of the staff is”.*

In addition, eight participants (44% of the sample) stated that they would rather focus on solving problems with the collaborative assistance of their fellow Foundation Phase (often within the same grade) colleagues or even on their own, than approach their SBST for such assistance.

*“ If I have a problem I go to my head of department. Each grade is supposed to have one representative on the SBST that must meet monthly, but this is not happening”.*

*“In the Foundation Phase every teacher has to deal with their learners mostly on his or her own and it is difficult to manage on your own”.*

*“... in the Foundation Phase the teachers sort themselves out”.*

This finding is of great concern as researchers elsewhere (Hall, *et al*, 1999; Gordon, 2000) have suggested that working collaboratively within the education system is crucial in supporting teachers and the inclusive education system in general. Such studies have shown that collaborative relationships amongst not only teachers but also within the school (which includes all staff members including administrative and management staff), with parents, and with other educational professionals, are viewed as essential in supporting teachers to meet the demands of delivering a curriculum to the diverse needs of all learners.

#### 5.1.3.4. Within School Resources

In terms of the results portrayed in Tables 7 and 8 the majority of the teachers in the study communicated that they felt supported mostly by their fellow colleagues, often those within the same grade.

*“We work well as a team within the Foundation Phase. We can discuss problems and get advice from each other”.*

*“Within our Foundation Phase ... we are able to discuss and make decisions as a team”.*

*“... For decision making and help with problematic learners within the Foundation Phase we can always go to our colleagues”.*

This finding parallels other research (Hall, *et al*, 1999; Gordon, 2000) that emphasises the need for teachers to work collaboratively as a team. Working collaboratively is emphasised as a means of providing teachers with comprehensive support.

#### 5.1.4. Teacher Stress

The most stressful issues for teachers during inclusion relate to their perceived competence (Forlin, 2001). In this study most of the teachers are still focussing heavily on the needs of the



mainstream or majority of learners. They expressed great concern regarding not affecting the education of the majority of their learners whilst still being able to focus on and attend to the individual child with special needs.

*“We have too large classes and we can’t cope with the large numbers of children we have to teach and attend to. We don’t give enough attention to all the learners”.*

*“If numbers are smaller then I can give everyone attention”.*

According to Kyriacou (2001), similar results have been obtained by researchers in other countries, where it is found that the highest levels of stress come from a teacher’s drive to maintain effective teaching for all the children in his/her class.

Some of the respondents also noted their difficulty in dealing with discipline issues in the classroom, particularly with the large number of learners they have to cope with in a single class.

*“Big classes get out of hand. I would be able to cope better with discipline problems because I would be able to manage smaller numbers in the class”.*

This correlates with the studies (van der Linde, van der Westhuizen and Wissing, 1999; Travers and Cooper, 1996 cited in Kyriacou, 2001) reporting on sources of teacher stress that identify disruptive behaviour of learners in the classroom as a very stressful problem for teachers to cope with.

This study revealed that there was an overwhelming recognition of problems and uncertainties experienced by teachers in the South African education system’s present period of transition. Participants conveyed an overall dissatisfaction with their working environment and listed a number of factors that were increasingly difficult for them to manage effectively. These factors included a difficulty in coping with the changes within the teaching structure (i.e. curriculum changes), times pressures and workload, and maintaining discipline in a class with a teacher ratio of approximately 1:40. Such findings have been echoed both internationally and locally (Rigby, Bennet and Boshoff, 1996; van der Linde, van der Westhuizen and Wissing, 1999; van Zyl and Pietersen, 1999; Forlin, 2001; Kyriacou, 2001) in identifying the main sources of stress facing teachers within inclusive schools.

## 5.2. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

South African education has undergone many changes in the past decade. Significantly, these changes have generated greater needs for teachers within their classrooms. Few empirical studies seem to have been undertaken nationally in order to understand and address teacher needs. This study investigated the needs of a selection of Foundation Phase teachers within an inclusive setting.

Inclusion can be perceived as a deterrent to the education of all children if teachers are not adequately supported to implement inclusion with effective instructional strategies. The major needs of teachers within an inclusive setting, as expressed in the guided interviews of this study, relate to the following points: Teachers expressed a need to be provided with resources such as (1) expert support personnel, (2) relevant training, (3) more learning materials, and (4) more teaching time with learners. They felt strongly that these were the types of human and material resources they required in order to be effective teachers, and therefore be able to promote the inclusive process within their classroom.

The results of the study indicate that the majority of teachers feel that they do not possess the necessary skills and resources that are needed to cope with the demands of teaching in an inclusive classroom. On the basis of the results of this study it seems that South African teachers do not feel adequately trained to assume the responsibilities of teaching inclusive classes. They feel unequipped to meet the individual needs of the learners in their classroom, given the learner diversity they are faced with.

Current training programmes are perceived as ineffective in meeting the needs of teachers. The respondents expressed a strong need for specialised in-service training to be implemented. Moreover, such specialised training programmes need to address the difficulties that teachers face and provide practical ways of helping them to support learners with diverse learning needs.

The findings of this study thus have huge implications for the development of effective support services within our country's education system. The present study suggests that the ultimate success of a school's efforts to implement an inclusion programme may depend largely on the

degree to which the teachers are provided with on-going training and support that is directly aimed at addressing their identified needs.

Inclusive education offers all learners access to equal educational institutions. However, without comprehensive support for teachers who are in the process of delivering education, inclusive education cannot promise that all learners will benefit from the system. “Inclusive education without support is not inclusion: it is dumping” (Centre for the Studies of Inclusive Education, 1989).

Given the findings of this study, policy makers planning inclusive education curriculum structures and training programmes must consider teachers’ perceptions of what they need within an inclusive classroom prior to implementation of inclusive policies. For example, the Department of Education needs to think beyond providing teachers with one-day workshops or meetings to help them meet the demands of inclusion. Instead, what the participants of this study have expressed is that it would be of greater benefit to provide teachers (especially those with little or no special education training or background) with on-going professional development that is targeted at addressing their areas of need. They further express that such training can be focussed on the components and demands of inclusive classrooms and provide them with demonstrations of specific instructional procedures and tools before and during the implementation of an inclusive curriculum. The findings of this study indicate that such interventions on behalf of the district based support teams for instance, could assist in alleviating teacher frustration and levels of stress. Hopefully, South African education policy makers will heed the views expressed by the respondents within this study whose valuable opinions have been expressed.

Efforts to improve schools often focus on a search for quick fixes that include new programmes and procedures, new curricular, new teaching methods, and new forms of assessments, all of which it is hoped, will transform educational institutions. This study asserts that to achieve an improvement in the quality of education it is important to focus attention on the improvement of the people at the forefront of deliverance of education. The findings of this study support the argument that successful inclusive education is dependent upon the teacher who is at the

forefront of implementation. Focussing on teachers and what they need to be effective within their classrooms is viewed to be the key to quality education in our schools. What is found in this study is that teachers have many needs that are persistently not being met. Teacher needs must be acknowledged and addressed in any attempt to assist them in developing a positive attitude towards inclusive education. Finally, this study emphasises that if teachers' needs are not intentionally engaged with then it could become a critical barrier to learning and the successful implementation of the policy of inclusive education within South Africa.

### 5.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While the results of this study reflect some of the research findings presented in the literature survey and are reliable for this sample, a number of aspects limit the applicability of these results to other populations in South Africa.

The major limitation of this study is the measure used for data collection. It would have been preferable for the instrument to be piloted first before utilising it within this study. This instrument yielded quantitative data in the Likert-Type Scale that did not always reflect the participants' feelings but rather what was believed to be the accepted response. The limitation of the Hawthorn effect (i.e. the distortion in behaviour that occurs when people know they are subjects of a study) is applicable to the present study. Subjects could have revealed socially acceptable or desirable responses and might not have been completely honest. The qualitative data on the other hand provided a greater richness in responses and appeared to tap into perceptions and feelings in a more reflective manner.

The second limitation concerns the overall size of the sample. Although the size of the sample is adequate for statistical purposes, it cannot be used to generalise to larger populations. The sample also consisted only of females and due to it not being gender diverse, limits the applicability of the results to other populations. In addition, this research is only applicable to a specific population of teachers in Gauteng, namely, grade 1–3 teachers based in township mainstream primary schools that were characteristically historically disadvantaged. Therefore, the research findings cannot be generalised to other countries and other parts of South Africa.

Thirdly, because participation in this research was voluntary there may be factors that are inherent in this sample that may not be so for other groups. Such factors may possibly include the participants' valuing the attention from the researcher that allowed them to voice their grievances and therefore could reflect the reason why they volunteered to participate in the research.

#### 5.4. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study must be considered to be a preliminary investigation into Foundation Phase teachers' perceptions of their needs within the inclusive classroom. Future studies need to investigate this issue in further detail.

The instrument used to investigate perceptions of needs in the future should be piloted before utilising it within the study so as to ensure the validity and reliability of such a measure. In addition, the instrument of measure should be examined carefully in terms of adopting a more qualitative or quantitative stance in generating more depth into participants' feelings and perceptions.

The sample of this study was drawn from township mainstream primary schools in Gauteng. Further research could include respondents from urban areas and other provinces. Studies of teacher needs in different regions of the country are certainly warranted, and with which the findings of the present study can be compared. Certainly, an area furthering research within this field could be to focus on teacher needs within rural based schools. Certainly, such an investigation may yield important findings into the unmet and often ignored plight of rural education institutions. For future studies, the sample could also be aimed at including a balanced representation of both males and females, and investigating the perceived needs of teachers dependent on their gender.

Given that the majority of the participants in this study have also had many years of experience (more than ten years), future studies could examine new teachers' perceptions of their needs as they are inducted into the inclusive classroom.

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## **APPENDIX I**

### **Porter's comparison of traditional and inclusionary approaches**

<i>Traditional Approach</i>	<i>Inclusionary Approach</i>
Focus on student	Focus on classroom
Assessment of student by specialist	Examine teaching / learning factors
Diagnostic / prescriptive outcomes	Collaborative problem solving
Student programme	Strategies for teachers
Placement in appropriate programme	Adaptive and supportive regular classroom environment

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Guided Interview**

#### **SECTION ONE** **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

##### **1. GENDER**

<b>Male</b>	
<b>Female</b>	

##### **2. AGE**

<b>20-25</b>		<b>40-44</b>	
<b>26-29</b>		<b>45-49</b>	
<b>30-34</b>		<b>50-55</b>	
<b>35-39</b>		<b>56+</b>	

##### **3. HOME LANGUAGE**

<b>English</b>		<b>IsiNdebele</b>		<b>Tshivenda</b>	
<b>Afrikaans</b>		<b>Sesotho</b>		<b>Xitsonga</b>	
<b>IsiZulu</b>		<b>Setwsana</b>		<b>Other</b>	
<b>IsiXhosa</b>		<b>Seswati</b>			

##### **4. TRAINING**

a. Highest level attained at school:\_\_\_\_\_

b. Highest post matric qualification:\_\_\_\_\_

<b>1.1 Name of Institution</b>	<b>1.2 Year Qualified</b>

**5. FIELD OF SPECIALISATION**

<b>Foundation Phase</b>	
<b>Intermediate Phase</b>	
<b>Senior Phase</b>	
<b>Adult Basic Education</b>	
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	

**6. POSITION HELD AT SCHOOL**

<b>Principal</b>	
<b>Head of Department</b>	
<b>Teacher</b>	
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	

**7. ARE YOU A MEMBER OF YOUR SCHOOL – BASED SUPPORT TEAM?**

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

**8. YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

<b>0-2 years</b>		<b>6-8 years</b>	
<b>2-4 years</b>		<b>8-10 years</b>	
<b>4-6 years</b>		<b>10+ years</b>	

**9. BRIEFLY LIST THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING COURSES THAT YOU HAVE ATTENDED IN THE LAST 2 YEARS.**

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## SECTION TWO

**Please indicate whether you:**

**1 = strongly agree**

**2 = agree**

**3 = unsure**

**4 = disagree**

**5 = strongly disagree**

**with the following statements.**

		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1</b>	I understand what my learners need					
<b>2</b>	Our district based support team is ineffective					
<b>3</b>	I am able to cope with my workload					
<b>4</b>	I feel unsupported					
<b>5</b>	I am able to implement what I have learnt through in-service training					
<b>6</b>	I know how to identify “at risk” learners					
<b>7</b>	I prefer working on my own					
<b>8</b>	Our district based support team is effective					
<b>9</b>	I feel overwhelmed by my workload					
<b>10</b>	In-service training has been very useful / helpful					
<b>11</b>	Our school based support team is ineffective					
<b>12</b>	I am able to provide my learners with the support they need					
<b>13</b>	I struggle to implement the ideas offered in in-service training					
<b>14</b>	I don’t get stressed out at work					
<b>15</b>	In-service training has not taught me anything new					
<b>16</b>	There are people I can turn to for help					
<b>17</b>	I cannot provide my learners with the support they need					
<b>18</b>	I prefer working with others					
<b>19</b>	I find it very difficult to identify learners who are “at risk”					
<b>20</b>	Our school based support team is effective					
<b>21</b>	I feel that my job is very stressful					
<b>22</b>	I struggle to understand the specific needs of my learners					

**SECTION THREE**  
**OPEN – ENDED QUESTIONS**

**1. What do you feel you need in order to be an effective teacher in the classroom?**

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**2.**

**2.1 What support do you currently receive as an educator within the school?**

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**2.2 Who provides such support for you?**

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**3.**

**3.1 How much do you know about your school's school-based support team?**

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**3.2 What do you see the role of district-based support teams as encompassing?**

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### APPENDIX III

#### Principal Consent Form



School of Human and Community Development

*Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa*

*Tel: (011) 717-8325*

My name is Nirosha Moolla, and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters at the University of the Witwatersrand. My area of focus is to identify and describe Foundation Phase teachers' perceived needs within the inclusive education system of South African schools.

Inclusive education constitutes a challenge to the education system as a whole, and in particular to teachers within mainstream classrooms. Teachers need to have the knowledge and skills to be flexible and creative in their approaches to teaching and learning. Requiring any teacher to manage these challenges and changes on their own would be unrealistic. Clearly, support for teachers is required, but what is crucial is targeting such support in areas in which teachers have needs. This study seeks to broaden the awareness of teachers' needs so as to assist in ensuring the effectiveness of future support programmes. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Participation in this research will entail being interviewed by myself, at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will last for approximately 30 minutes. With your permission this interview will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Participation is voluntary, and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you would be included in the research report. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person within your institution at any time, and will only be processed by myself. You may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point.

If you choose to participate in the study please fill in your details on the form below and place it in the sealed box provided. I will empty the box at regular intervals, and will contact you within two weeks in order to discuss your participation. Alternatively I can be contacted telephonically at (011) 852-1747. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute both to a larger body of knowledge on teachers' needs at a grassroots level. This can help to inform the development of future support programmes.

Kind Regards

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Nirosha Moolla  
(Researcher)

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **Participant Consent Forms**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to being interviewed by Nirosha Moolla for her study on teacher needs within the inclusive classroom. I understand that:

- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ consent to my interview, with Nirosha Moolla for her study on teacher needs within inclusive classrooms, being tape-recorded. I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person in this institution at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher.
- All tape recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX V**

### **Responses to the open-ended questions of the interview**

#### **1. What do you feel you need in order to be an effective teacher in the classroom?**

- a) I feel that we need much more training and support. Classroom roles are too big. We have a minimum of 40 in a class and it is sometimes impossible to see each child and give each child individual attention in every single learning area. They (the district officials) suggest group work, but still with these little children as a teacher you can give off your best if there are 30 in a class for instance. Personally, being a head of department (HOD) as well, the pressure is on me. I don't have sufficient time to do justice to my learners. I have to manage my own class work, and help other teachers with what they need to do. With resources also. They (the district officials) say we must improvise, but our learners sometimes can't even bring stationery to school, so how can they bring other materials from home. It is very demanding for teachers to meet these needs, even to make things for our learners. Time is against us. We don't have enough time to do all of that also.
- b) There are too many children in a class to cope with. In my class this year, of 39, 18 learners need support. And you can only do that much within the period of time we're given. It is impossible. Even with group work it is difficult. Some of the learners have to have a translator, because of the language barrier. I don't speak any of the vernaculars. I need smaller classes to cope, and interpreters to help the other African language mother tongue speakers because this is an area that I'm not able to address or help them in. There is a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, such as Zulu, Tswana, Xhosa, Venda and we don't always have a learner in class who can translate for us.
- c) A good relationship with both learners and other educators in your working environment is very important. Knowing that you have other colleagues' support and so you don't have to worry about your personal issues on your own. There are people you can talk to and that are there to help you through your own difficult times. We also need well-planned lessons to maintain our learners' interests. A classroom conducive to learning, to motivate learners to come to school. They come into a nice classroom everyday then they will want to come to school everyday and not go out on the streets. A smaller class (like in model c schools). We are overloaded with too many children in a class and so we cannot devote the time we need

to learners with special needs. Fewer learners in a class mean meeting all the learners' needs better. To know that teaching is a call and that you need to be dedicated to your learners who you are responsible for.

- d) To prepare my lessons beforehand and according to the level of the learners. We must have proper class management techniques, and for those who struggle we should have training for how to deal with discipline problems and things like that. You need lots of patience. Communication and relationship building with learners is important to help teaching at the end of the day. You need to create a "family" with the children in your class. By bonding with your class you see that they become much more understanding of where you're coming from and they are a lot more cooperative when it comes to schoolwork and duties. Parents and teachers also need to consult regularly to understand children's backgrounds and to involve parents in their child's education.
- e) The teacher : pupil ratio definitely needs to come down. For every teacher there should be a maximum of 25 children. Then one can easily give each child the attention they need. We also need more resources. We don't have enough learning materials and we need actual concrete learning materials, everything from books to charts to stationery to magazines. You name it we can use it if we have it on hand.
- f) It's very difficult there's just so much we do need. I will need to think about that one a bit
- g) We definitely need bigger classroom space. I mean the actual size of our classrooms is too small. These rooms were not built to seat 50 children. It was built under the old government when we had only 20 children in a class. If we cannot have bigger classrooms then there must be smaller numbers of children in a class. Now we have become like lecturers. We lecture to so many faces each day and there is no or maybe very little individual attention given, especially for weaker learners.
- h) I need a structure to guide me as a teacher. Now, with the new curriculum changes the material is helpful because we can adjust it to how we like to, but we do need more structure for like lesson plans and things and definitely less changes so that we know exactly what it is we must follow.
- i) There are lots of problems with the new changes because within the school environment some changes are not implemented. I feel that everybody must be trained altogether and everybody must accept the changes altogether so that there is uniformity and not teachers

doing their own thing. Or else go back to what they were used to in the old system of teaching so that everybody is teaching in the same way using the same methods. Also we need to consider the new times and the new society we live in. There are lots of changes that need to also happen in the community with parents. We need to change parents' attitudes. We need to involve parents more and not also exclude them from education, even though it is tough to involve parents because they don't play their role in the child's learning at home. Sometimes they also can't because of illiteracy in the home, and then we need to know this and help the child in another way. But sometimes parents won't be involved because they it is the teachers responsibility to educate their child.

- j) We need plenty of resources. Our learners need to use and experiment with things at their own level otherwise; teachers have to make their own materials for lessons and implement their own ideas. We don't have the time to do this, and why should we impose our creativity on the children when if they have the resources they can learn to create things on their own and be resourceful. We also desperately need a programme suited to these learners, taking into account their home languages.
- k) What I really need and want is a teacher aide to help manage the large ratio of children that are in my class. Even if we are 2 teachers we can give so much more attention to the children and more time with them on their work. We also need much more learning materials and resources like learning texts, etc. we need more human and material resources because our children have very little exposure to the world outside. They come from deprived homes where they don't even know what the ocean looks like. We need materials to help them see the world and experience places that they may never have the opportunity to go to. Definitely we must have parental involvement to assist weaker children especially. When parents get involved, helping that child becomes so much easier because there is so much they can do at home to help the child progress.
- l) We need more resources such as textbooks and other learning materials to accommodate the large number of children in a single class. Sharing doesn't work because children work at different paces. What I would like is a checklist, if it was possible, to help me to identify changes in learners moods and behaviours and what it may possibly be a symptom of. I need to know how to help children or how to be aware of their emotional development and difficulties because their emotions impact on their ability to learn. We are not trained to

identify and understand the emotional functioning of our learners so it is difficult to deal with, for example with cases of abuse, rape, neglect, deprived homes, death, divorce, etc. we do need to know when or how to help the child because we tend to overlook it. I know I need to focus more on their emotional functioning.

- m) A forum where we could be trained to help kids emotionally and discuss children who have emotional problems. Also, time during the day when we could connect and speak to our children about their feelings. We don't have time to just spend with our children. Everything is a rush because you have to make sure your curriculum is covered. In our large classes, work that needs to be completed can be too much so often we tend to sideline the actual child and only focus on the academic work. We need to stop with academics and find time to speak to our children and understand their backgrounds and life outside of school. Large numbers also means that it is very difficult to manage and address all the children's needs. We also have limited learning materials, which is a hindrance because the learners are forced to share. But we are forced to because of the stipulated budget.
- n) I would like it if the department of education could reduce the role in our classes. Working with 40 in a class, we can't also help the slow learners. We can't give them the support they need to help them learn better. In the past with smaller classes we could support slow learners much better. Also, parents don't reinforce learning at home, so there is no practice at home and this means that they are lost in the class when new work is moved onto. For instance with reading of phonics lists. Children need to learn at home so we can move forward in class. We can't complete everything in class and they must do work at home. But parents don't cooperate and help children at home and they don't see it as their responsibility at home.
- o) Support from our admin staff and the office (principal, deputy, HOD, senior management team). They need to support the teachers, decisions and back them up, and not take the parents side and reprimand teachers for doing what we know is best for the child. The senior management team (SMT) does not stand up for us and explain to parents that what we (teachers) do is for the benefit of the child and not simply because we just feel like it or are being vindictive. The parents feel that we target certain children and then the SMT also undermine our authority and say that we can't keep children in after school. So the office does not support us in our decisions or methods, they take the parents side. We need support

from parents when it comes to completing homework at home. We need the cooperation from parents so that when we keep children in to complete work, if parents aren't managing at home, then they must agree to let us keep the children in to help them after school. But that extra time is needed for learners and we can't give it to them because the parents complain.

- p) I need a smaller class. If numbers are smaller then I can give everyone attention, and have time to complete paperwork, and spend time on developing learning materials of my own that I have to have to help teach the children that don't have anything to bring from home. Children come with very little so you have to make things that they can use to make their learning easier and more interesting.
- q) Reducing the number of learners in a class. We have too large classes and we can't cope with the large numbers of children we have to teach and attend to. We don't give enough attention to all the learners. With smaller numbers teaching is much easier and better. You can take your time and teach them properly. The government needs to provide more resources for each learner so that they don't have to share textbooks and are able to work at own pace. We also need programmes for helping children with learning problems, how to best help them, and how to teach them differently.
- r) Please if the government could reduce class numbers and provide resources to each learner to use individually. Smaller numbers in the class means more teaching time and individual attention for each child. I would be able to also cope better with discipline problems because I would be able to manage smaller numbers in the class. Big classes get out of hand, also when they have to share learning materials. It can be very disruptive for other children when their partners work slower or have poor concentration, which distracts them from their work because they have to share. If they have their own then they could work in a group still but also independently when they choose to and not be influenced by others poor performance in class.



**2. What do you see the role of district based support teams as encompassing?**

- a) In 2003 I received their support with a particularly difficult case. They assessed the child and did a follow up on him. This year I haven't consulted them yet. The district based support team (DBST) plays a big role when we need to retain a learner in the same grade. They need to come to schools to see the learners on a one-to-one. They also need to help with the formation of the school based support team (SBST) and with all the administrative paperwork. We need to know how to fill out support forms properly. The DBST should come into our classrooms more often and show us how to work with learners with learning difficulties on a one on one. They need to provide us with a district psychologist who is available for us to consult with regularly.
- b) We need to receive more assistance from consulting educational psychologists that offer their services to the school. For example especially when dealing with assessments. We need psychologists from the district that can offer us these services. The DBST need to assist teachers with accommodating and placing learners in remedial schools or classes when it's deemed necessary so that as the teacher I will then be able to focus on other learners in our big classes who also need my attention. I think we must have qualified remedial teachers from the district to come into schools on a regular basis to help us with learners who have special needs.
- c) The DBST can help in minimising the paperwork. You may have a rich file with all your planning and lesson prep, but it need not be repetitive. They need to cut out repetitive administrative forms and have one thing for each area and not repetitive information that wastes time.
- d) The DBST needs to have officials that come into the classroom. They need to come in and observe the teaching, give us guidance on the lessons, how we should be doing it, and are we doing the right thing. In the classroom, they can support us by showing us how to work with the learner to address their specific learning problem.
- e) I feel that the DBST needs to provide teachers with more support. They need to come into our classrooms and see what our situation is like since integration. They must help us by showing us what and how to implement all this curriculum changes. They have to ask us what we need in the classroom, ask us how we are coping in order to know what's going on with teaching in the actual classroom and not on paper. Regular contact from the district on

an advisory capacity and not to pick out our mistakes will also be better. They need to stop changing the curriculum and instead make a final decision and have greater consistence and structure, and then show us how to implement that.

- f) They need to guide us teachers more. They can for instance come in and demonstrate in our class how to work with and help our weaker learners. They need to show us how to work with that child that needs extra support and is having problems.
- g) The DBST I believe should be there to teach us the practical side of Outcomes Based Education not just the theory in the workshops. For this they must come into the classroom and demonstrate how to implement the new curriculum. The actual lesson itself for example. Definitely more practicals like that will make it easier for us to understand how to implement the changes in our curriculum, cause right now we are just doing what we think is right.
- h) The district teams must not expect so much from the learners at the lower level (foundation phase) cause we end up pushing them through and then they can't cope in the senior primary because they can't manage with the standard that is too high for them. If the DBST officials come into the school not just to assess the child or just to evaluate the teachers and then leave, but rather come into the school on a daily basis and work with the children who we identify as having a problem then they will realise the reality of where our children come from and at what level they are really achieving. They need to be there with the children and show us how to work with them especially when having so many you need to attend to in a single class.
- i) I would think that having psychologists on the DBST that don't only come in at the beginning of the year but on a regular basis is a necessity for us because of the number of struggling learners we have. As professionals they can work with the children on a regular basis even if it's emotional or academic and see and help them regularly so that we can further help them in the classroom. But the difference will be that the children will have this kind of professional trained support on an individual basis, whereas right now we can't give them such specialised individual attention. Also they can guide us as teachers on how to know what is best for this child.
- j) I personally do not see the need for a DBST because the educator knows her learners well. Firstly the DBST does not know the child, as the child is in a class with the educator the whole year and nobody from the DBST sees this child functioning in the classroom at all. All

they have are results on paper, so on what grounds do they have the right to pass or fail a child if they've never even met or worked with the child? They have no idea of the problems we experience in the classroom. I feel that the educator is the best judge and that the DBST has no function simply because they are not involved in our classrooms at all.

- k) DBST members need to come into the classroom and see what we're faced with. To see the actual learning environment that is happening, then maybe they will be able to realise that all these changes are not working. We are not coping with the changes so how then are we supposed to teach properly in the classroom. It's hard for us to understand all these new things but then we're just expected to implement it. Maybe if they see for themselves the reality of what's happening in the classroom, that it's not just on paper, maybe then they will see that the new changes aren't working and that they need to find different ways to help us teach better. They could take an active role in providing us with teacher aides, which can also increase employment because parents can be brought in and involved so that they become more aware of what is happening in the classroom. They can train parents and in this way really get everybody playing a role and being responsible for the child's education.
- l) The DBST need to be actively part of the system. They can be more proactive by coming to schools on a regular basis, even if it's only every term that we see them. In this way they can be in touch with our problems and support our schools and staff so that the burden isn't only the teacher in the classroom. District officials have been out of the classrooms for so long that they haven't kept up with the changes and needs that are occurring now within the classroom as only a teacher faces. If they come in more regularly and spend time with us that will be better than them just giving us forms to fill in. Come and see for yourselves and guide us how to support our learners.
- m) I think that these guys should come into our schools to see the role of teachers and learners' responsibilities in the classroom. In this way they will be able to recognise and understand the needs of teachers when it comes to in-service training and more learning materials, and not just give us what they think we need. They must see for themselves what teachers need and how to best support us. The district must really start developing workshops that address our needs exactly and not have workshops based on what they assume our problems might be. They can do this by coming in and observing us in the classroom instead of sitting in their offices and drawing up their own agenda.

- n) DBST need to come into the classrooms and examine what the reality is. Then when they understand what everyday teaching involves then they can look at the needs of the children and draw up a curriculum that can help our children and help us to teach them properly. They can give us the skills to help all children if they are aware of what it is exactly that children need. They have to come and see first hand.
- o) Many district officials do not know what goes on in the foundation phase especially. They haven't been in our classrooms. Many of them used to be high school trained teachers before they got promoted to district level, so they don't know about our children except for what they maybe are trained from a textbook. They need to come in and be made aware of our children's functioning at this level then they can make changes for more user-friendly material. They need the input from our foundation phase teachers to develop an effective curriculum for optimal learning right from the beginning. The person who makes education policy for curriculum development needs to consult our grade 1 teachers especially to develop a curriculum that can address all the learners' needs.
- p) The DBST needs to give us the guidance we need to cope with the large classes of learners we are faced with, together with the learning problems in our large classes. Maybe if they visit our classes and see what we're faced with then they can show us what to do to cope better. Right now for them it's all on paper and they need to see practically not theoretically what it means to implement curriculum changes. We also need psychologists from the district, 1 or 2 per school would be the ideal situation, to help with behavioural and learning problems. We need that kind of professional expertise that needs to be consistent and regular in our school.
- q) I feel that the educator is the better judge of where the learner is at. The district teams need to allow educators to make decisions about retaining the learner because the learner is with the educator throughout the year and not them. Giving teachers more power to make these decisions because we know our learners best is what they should be allowing. They don't know or understand our learners at all because they are not here to see how the child struggles first hand.
- r) DBST should be more involved with us teachers. Outside of compulsory workshops we have to attend, we don't see or speak to them at all. They never liase with us as they should. They

need to come into our schools and talk to us to find out what we struggle with specifically and then give us guidance how to cope and what to do.

**3. How much do you know about your school's school based support team (SBST)?**

- a) We have a functional SBST with the necessary members to make up a team. With severe learners mostly the SBST tries to help, but with other learners we try to cope on your own.
- b) I am on the SBST. My duty is to do home visits but we haven't started as yet. We will be starting as soon as term 3 starts. It really is a process. The SBST needs to first evaluate learners that have been referred before we can actually provide any support. We are planning to draw up a programme for teachers to follow, a remedial programme that will be monitored closely.
- c) They are there but I haven't really referred any children to them. Also, I haven't heard anything from them since the beginning of the year. They haven't given us any feedback on meetings or anything like that so I don't really know what they've been doing. What I do know is that some teachers from the senior phase have sent children to them but definitely not us here in the foundation phase.
- d) The school does have a SBST but I haven't sent any children to them. I know they have just started this year so maybe next term they will report back to the staff. But otherwise we haven't heard from them yet.
- e) I am on the SBST. We haven't met as a team together yet, but we are about six members. We're made up of heads of departments, some teachers who have previous training in special education, and some level one teachers. But no one on the staff so far has requested any support. It's only six months of this year and we've just completed our assessment of the children so next term some referrals will probably be made. Our SBST is there for remedial purposes. Our team was established some time last year.
- f) They haven't really seen any learners yet but I'm sure they will as the year progresses. I feel I know my learners best so I prefer to work with them myself. I know their areas of weaknesses and I manage to support them given the time.
- g) It comprises of a few members from all the phases in the school. They are looking at instituting a weekly remedial programme for children with learning problems. I haven't gone to the SBST cause I have managed on my own thus far.
- h) The SBST is more focussed on children in the senior phase because that's when the learning difficulties seem to emerge more because they have been pushed ahead by the

GDE. In the foundation phase, every teacher has to deal with the learners mostly on his or her own and it is difficult to manage on your own.

- i) I feel that psychologists must be more involved with the SBST because many of the problems the SBST are faced with is not always within their training to deal with, especially when it comes to emotional problems. But this also needs to be regular and consistent and not just once in a while.
- j) I am well versed in this area as we work as a team to give support for educators and learners. We have programmes in place and continuous discussions and support, which are given to educators.
- k) I am on it but we were just formed at the beginning of this year. It is a group of us, teachers from both the foundation and senior phases. We find it hard to meet because we're all so busy with our daily class work that fitting it in is just more work that we have to take on. The last time we met we discussed some senior phase children but in the foundation phase I think the teachers sort themselves out.
- l) We do have a SBST formed in January of this year (2004). They have met and given us guidance regarding the 450 forms. I personally have not had any 1-to-1 dealings with any of the members. But informally we have discussed problematic learners and they have given me some advice – but not in any formal meetings.
- m) The SBST is focussed more on remedial problems but they do try to incorporate and address some behavioural problems – but not to a large extent.
- n) The SBST is set up for a remedial focus but we don't even use that. For this whole year they haven't given us any input or help with the slower learners. Everything we do with these children is by our own accord, not what they have proposed or supposed to have developed to help us. We don't have meetings with them. I feel that unless it's a major issue then only can I go to them, but with those who struggle with phonics and maths for example, I just give these children some extra time after school and hope it helps them.
- o) Our SBST has not been functioning. We don't meet at all. If I have a problem I go to my HOD. Each grade is supposed to have one representative on the SBST that must meet monthly, but this has not been happening. Some of the senior teachers probably don't even know about the special ed. child in my class which just shows how uninvolved the SBST and the rest of the staff is.

- p) I know that they do exist but they haven't really implemented anything yet. Maybe because they're still new but we haven't gone to them for any help yet. You also don't hear from them or that they're meeting or anything.
- q) The SBST is very helpful and always willing to assist and guide educators in the right direction. We have discussions and a great deal of support from them. They give us advice on how to best help a problematic child.
- r) The SBST is quite well informed. They try to give us things to do in the classroom to help children who are slow. They offer their expertise to us, but mostly for senior phase children who are seen as more serious cases.



**4. What support do you currently receive as an educator within the school?**

- a) From within the school teachers within the same grade help each other. Support from the SBST is also there especially from those who have further training in special needs. We also have Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) day workshops but it's difficult to always implement the training because of limited teaching time. We've had some training from local organisations, which I found particularly valuable. Like, in 2003 JISS (Johannesburg Institute of Social Services, a local based organisation) conducted workshops regarding learning difficulties for us, which was very helpful for me.
- b) I feel support by my HOD first then from the deputy principal and the principal. For me there's always been in-house support. They help me by discussing the problem and what is the best way to go in terms of interventions for the learner.
- c) Training from the GDE workshops have been very beneficial. I learnt a lot. It introduced us to OBE and explained the new concepts well. They should be more workshops to increase our knowledge and understanding but there also needs to be consistency in terms of what we're taught from one workshop to another. Stop changing the curriculum and don't train us repetitively on the same things. Other support I get mostly from my colleagues. The staff is very helpful in giving you advice when you have difficult learners.
- d) I work quite independently but I do receive support from the principal and deputy principal. I do feel supported by them especially with difficult learners and parents who I have had problems with. Also the district training has been good but not focussed enough.
- e) I feel mostly supported by our HOD. She comes into our classrooms and checks on individual learners' work. If you need anything she is readily available to help and guide you. She is very open and approachable. She is very compassionate and she understands the children's background. The principal does sometimes help with discipline problems.
- f) Any problems that I have I can always go to my HOD and I know I will receive her full support on the matter. Also from the workshops run by the district, only certain of them have been helpful and helped me to understand OBE.
- g) From my HOD who is very supportive. I can go to her at anytime with any problem I may be having in the classroom and personally. She is the support in our phase.
- h) There is a lot of support within our school. The SBST will help us with children with learning problems. We can refer to our SBST if we cannot help the children and they will try

to help them with reading programmes. They also give us feedback from the other teachers in order to monitor the child's learning in the classroom. They offer that remedial help we need.

- i) The SBST is there to support and help us, but they are more focussed on learning or academic problems, which doesn't really help us to support learners with emotional problems. Emotional support for learners is poor cause we are not trained to identify children who are raped or abused, and we do not know how to help them psychologically or emotionally. So we are scared to open it up and accept it in our classrooms cause we are scared we can't help them.
- j) There is very good support from all the educators in our school. The principal also supports us with our problems.
- k) We mostly manage on our own. We can get help from certain colleagues and other teachers in the foundation phase, but generally we have to cope with weaker learners on our own.
- l) We work well as a team within the foundation phase. We can discuss problems and get advice from each other. With very severe problems and serious cases we can go to management (principal and deputy principal) and they are helpful. They try their best to support us so that we can help our learners.
- m) Management is very approachable for problems on both a professional and personal level. Within our foundation phase no one dictates to us. We are able to discuss and make decisions as a team. The staff is also very supportive and aware of each other's emotional state and so if you are feeling stressed then you can get their support and understanding. Nobody pushes you beyond your capabilities and so it's easier to go into the classroom when you have that empathy from your colleagues. We are a very united staff and often will help each other out with duties.
- n) Only from the HOD who is sometimes there to help with disruptive and difficult learners. But often you have to sort it out yourself even with fighting in the class, you are told by the office to sort it out yourself and no one is interested in coming to assist you.
- o) Not much. I definitely don't get support from the principal or deputy principal. My colleagues are there to help me with ideas and listen to my complaints, but otherwise you get no support for dealing with major problems like difficult parents.
- p) I don't feel like there is much support in school. In class we do our own thing. We decide how best to help the child that has learning problems even though we don't have the right

training for it so we're not even sure if what we're doing is enough. Sometimes the child does manage to the end of the year but after that we know s/he still struggles in the senior phase, but we can't keep them back. We either do things mostly on our own or we can discuss it with the other grade teacher for some advice. But that's about it.

- q) I feel very supported by the educators on staff and the principal. We are encouraged to work cooperatively within the staffing body. Everybody is there to help you if you approach them. The principal is also supportive because he listens to you and finds out how to best help you.
- r) We often get feedback from the other educators that attend workshops. This is helpful because they are willing to share their knowledge and training with us. We really try to work in a team, for decision-making and help with problematic learners. Within the foundation phase we can always go to our colleagues.