

Inclusive Education: A case study of a primary school classroom in a socio-
economically disadvantaged environment

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Abstract

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In celebrating 10 years of democracy, South Africa has among other things placed even greater emphasis on human rights. The education of those experiencing barriers to learning, where it has been offered, has historically been separate from general education. The right to inclusive education is currently an international concern and can be viewed as one of the many initiatives that could steer this country into the future. However, other demands also highlighted in this research, make it difficult for ordinary schools to take up the challenge.



The primary aim of this research was to investigate current conditions in one typical South African classroom in a disadvantaged area, with reference to inclusion. The study took place at a primary school and attempts to provide a rich description of the school, classroom, educator and learners. The context described is one likely to be familiar to many educators. The study identifies and portrays in detail the range of barriers to learning present in a particular classroom and describes the educator and methods used to accommodate learners.

The findings indicate that this educator's classroom can to a certain extent be described as an inclusive classroom and some of the strategies used to accommodate learners are in line with inclusive practices. The final discussion raises a number of important issues with respect to barriers to learning, curriculum, educator training and school support. It is hoped that this study will highlight key issues and possible solutions that could facilitate the implementation of inclusion in South Africa.

December 2004

Declaration

I declare that *Inclusive Education: A case study of a primary school classroom in a socio-economically disadvantaged environment* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Sakeena Elloker

December 2004




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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Somtyds voel ek dat ek net die problem myself moet oplos. Soos hulle sê, ‘The wheels of bureaucracy turn slowly’. Ek kan nie ‘n jaar wag terwyl een van die kinders op die ‘waiting list’ wag nie. Wat word nou van die kinders wat ek nie kan help nie? Hulle suffer; hulle moet maar op die waiting list wag”. . . . “Daar is nie iets specific wat ek doen as ek dink dat daar iets verkeerd is met ‘n kind nie. I’m like Sherlock Holmes sometimes: as ek suspicious is, moet ek my ore en oë oop hou” – Mrs. Sea

I believe, as do many others in the field of education, that it is time to stop developing criteria for who does and who does not belong in the mainstream and to turn the spotlight instead towards increasing the capabilities of the regular school to meet the unique needs of all students.



Increased marginalisation of learners who experience barriers to learning in mainstream schools does not bode well for a country that fought so hard for equality. Thus, I predict that the ensuing years will see remarkable development in the implementation of inclusion.

1.1 Stating the problem

Education in South Africa is in the process of transformation. The government has made great strides in the development of education in South Africa. Those of us concerned with the welfare of learners who are experiencing barriers to learning have tried to ensure that they are not overlooked in the restructuring of the South African education system. The

very existence of the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996a), Outcomes-Based Education (Department of Education, 2002), and the Education White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001) shows that there are initiatives that have not only transformed the old apartheid education system, but also signals a degree of success in this endeavour. In line with international trends, many people in South Africa see the value in inclusive education, and as Naicker (1999:92) points out, inclusive education is implicit in OBE to a large extent, in that both call for “A clear set of expectations or learning outcomes for a single system of education that accommodates the needs of all learners”.

Even though policies have changed, problems still exist which have made an already difficult educational transformation even more painful and confusing. Lack of resources, financial constraints, lack of provision for learners experiencing barriers to learning, rationalisation, large classes, and insufficient training have been some of the difficulties educators are still faced with.

This research takes its starting point from the premise that there are learners experiencing barriers to learning in classrooms whose needs are not fully accommodated. This is reiterated by Lomofsky, Roberts & Mvambi (1999b:71), who states that “Teachers in mainstream classrooms will be, and in many cases already are, accommodating learners with a diverse range of needs. They work with learners of different ages and stages of development, cultural and linguistic diversity, and a wide range of ability/disability and special educational needs”.

1.2 Aims

The primary aim of this research was to investigate current conditions in one typical South African classroom in a disadvantaged area, with reference to inclusion. This implies attention to

the physical setting of the community, school, and classroom
the psycho-social character of the classroom
the educator as a person and a professional
the extent and range of special learning needs
the practices used by the educator to support learners
the support available to the educator.

1.3 Theoretical framework

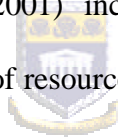


This study was framed within the broader context of inclusive education. It addresses the issues of principles, policy and research within inclusive education. An international perspective on special education and the history of general education and special education in South Africa was required to fully understand the development of inclusive education in this country.

Chapter 2 traces the history of special education and introduces the concept of inclusion. This is then followed by a detailed discussion of the characteristics of an inclusive school. It is evident from the literature (Giangreco, 1997 & Westwood, 1997) that an inclusive school among others:

- Embraces *all* learners
- Adapts the curriculum
- Puts into place support networks
- Encourages parent participation, collaborative teamwork and professional development

Different perspectives on the exact nature of inclusion are discussed (Ainscow, 1999. Department of Education, 2001 and Englebrecht, Eloff, Newmark & Kachelhoffer, 1997). The main issues which were evident from the research in support of inclusion are as follows. Education for *all* is a human right and based on what is perceived to be just and fair. Research also shows that inclusion has many benefits which include increased self esteem, promotion of diversity and the development of communication skills (Farrell, 2001 & Stainback & Stainback, 1992). Arguments against the implementation of inclusion (Knight, 1998 & Forlin, 2001) include the issues of increased finance, insufficient teacher training and a lack of resources.



A discussion on inclusion in South Africa is ineffective without a look into the history of this country. The history of general education and special education in South Africa is unique in that the apartheid policies shaped and controlled the provision and development of education. Section 2.5 outlines the history of special education and details the effects the apartheid policies had on general education and special education.

With South Africa's transition into a democracy many South African authors, researchers and disability organisations came out strongly in support of changes within special education. Policy documents and developments of note are listed below and are discussed in detail later.

- S. A. Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996a)
- Outcomes Based Education (Department of Education, 2002)
- National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) (Department of Education, 1997a)
- White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education System (Department of Education, 2001)

The main characteristics of inclusive education, as envisaged for South Africa, are outlined by the Department of Education, (2001). This chapter concludes with a look at different South African perspectives on inclusion and presents research conducted on inclusion in South Africa. In this discussion authors, (Nell, 1997 & Meerkotter, 1998) present arguments for and against inclusion. Although similar to arguments presented earlier, the main focus seems to be on whether inclusion can right the wrongs that the apartheid legacy left behind. While this argument is consistent in some of the literature, others (Department of Education, 1997b & Muthukrishna, Farmer & Sader, 2000) do outline the value and possible drawbacks inclusion will have for South African education.

Chapter 3 describes the character of an inclusive educator. It also outlines the strategies educators can use to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning. The literature (Engelbrecht, 1999, Jorgensen, 1997 & Lomofsky et al, 1999b) suggests that an educator's attitudes, beliefs and philosophy about teaching and learning form the basis for successful teaching. The results of a number of research initiatives included in Chapter 3 highlight this point.

The main strategies educators can use to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning include, strategies for adapting classroom curriculum, strategies to facilitate emotional and social development, classroom management strategies and educator support. These strategies are discussed in detail together with evidence regarding their effectiveness (Rose, 2001, Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996, McNamara & Moreton, 2001 & Richards, 1999).

Chapters 2 and 3 can be viewed as the background information of this dissertation which will enable readers to fully understand inclusive education and the development of general and special education in South Africa. The discussion of the characteristics of inclusion and the strategies educators can use to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning will further enable readers to recognise the theoretical aspects presented in the case study of the school.



1.4 Methodology

In essence, this study is a detailed description of a classroom and a community and its context and highlights the challenges educators face, which makes it well suited to a case study format. A case study falls within the category of qualitative methodology. A qualitative form of research facilitates a form of inquiry that tries to understand social phenomena and highlights the opinions and views of the people being studied. This research hoped to provide a portrait of a classroom and of a community and show an 'ordinary' educator, the learners she works with, and the conditions she experiences. It

includes a description of a school, an educator, learners and the strategies an educator uses to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Data was collected through interviews, observations, field notes and document study. They are presented in narrative form as befits a case study. Diary extracts of the researcher are included and presented in italics. Often, the views of the educator, (Mrs. Sea) which were obtained through interviews, are presented verbatim. Code switching is prevalent, particularly in Chapters 5 and 6. This was retained as I feel it gives the reader a true reflection of the school, community, educator, and learners. It also provides insight into the type of person Mrs. Sea is. Quotation marks are used in these instances. English translations are provided in Appendix 5 (Chapter 5) and Appendix 6 (Chapter 6) in areas where Afrikaans texts are used. Concord errors are prevalent in the translations and were not rectified to ensure that readers get a real sense of the character and manners of speech of Mrs. Sea. Interleaved colour sheets are used to highlight translations. The results (Chapters 5 and 6) are longer than is usual because of the need to provide rich detail.

The research took place at Whaleside Primary School over a period of 18 months. Although the results of a case study cannot be generalized, other schools might recognise themselves in this case study since it has the following key features. Its setting, the fiscal and economic situation, the high teacher:child ratio, a large percentage of the learner population residing in the surrounding area, and the school is situated in a socio-economically disadvantaged environment, which has become synonymous with theft, gang violence, and poverty.

A grade 3 educator, Mrs. Sea, volunteered to participate in this research endeavour. Her interest in remedial work spurred her on to participate. The rest of the staff and the principal agreed to take part in the research, but the main data collection took place in Mrs. Sea's classroom.

1.5 Rationale

Learners experiencing barriers to learning are said to comprise almost 40% of the South African school population (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker, & Engelbrecht, 1999). This highlights the importance of accepting these learners and developing strategies to accommodate them in mainstream schools. It also highlights the need to understand existing conditions.



Good research does not necessarily solve a problem, but could highlight key issues and point to new directions for solutions. Instead of just motivating for the equality of all learners and deliberating over the constraints facing educators, this study is a constructive attempt at educating and exposing government and policy makers alike to the realities of education at grassroots level. It should generate questions concerning the procedures employed by schools to identify and respond to the challenges of accommodating learners experiencing barriers to learning. It could also help to determine how the Education Department could support all schools in responding creatively to these challenges.

Many policy issues are still being debated and formulated at government level. To strengthen their argument for inclusion at parliamentary level, lobbyists need, in addition to policies, sound studies to draw from. This study, like many others that have been completed, could give lobbyists the necessary support they require. This study will therefore add to the existing literature on this topic and should encourage further debate and discussion.

This is an exciting time for me to be involved in education. My passion for teaching has encouraged me to further equip myself with the necessary skills to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning. The Bachelor of Education in Educational Psychology course re-affirmed my commitment to developing innovative and exciting ways to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning and to discarding the labels of ‘stupid’ and ‘disabled’, which are so often applied to learners experiencing barriers to learning. This study was an ideal opportunity for me to be actively involved in working towards quality education for all and to develop myself as an educator.

1.6 Chapter overview

Chapter 1

This chapter sketches the context, explains the rationale and provides an overview of the entire study.

Chapter 2

This chapter deals primarily with the history, characteristics, and principles of inclusive education. It reflects international trends and ongoing discussions and debates around inclusion. This is followed by a concise account of recent specialised education changes and general education changes in South Africa.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 documents the qualities, characteristics, and skills an inclusive educator should have. It also includes research about the influence and effectiveness of certain attitudes and teaching strategies.

Chapter 4

The research design and methodology are set out in Chapter 4. The school, community, educator, and learners are described in this chapter. The aims, research method, data collection, analysis procedures, and validity and ethics of this study are also explained here.

Chapter 5

This chapter first contextualises the community, school, classroom, and educator in considerable detail. It is followed by a portrait of Mrs. Sea and of the learners. It is comprehensive and detailed, giving readers insight into the lives of the educator and learners.

Chapter 6

The chapter portrays, by means of vignettes, the range of barriers to learning in Mrs. Sea's classroom. It also describes the strategies she employs to accommodate learners who are experiencing barriers to learning and the support available to her.

Chapter 7

This chapter attempts to interpret the data and to link it to international and local research findings. It discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the study and makes some tentative recommendations.

1.7 Definitions



The following definitions are adopted in this study.

Inclusive education, as defined by Engelbrecht, (1999:6) is “a shared value which promotes a single system of education dedicated to ensuring that all learners are empowered to become caring, competent and contributing citizens in an inclusive, changing and diverse society”.

Learners with special educational needs, refers specifically to learners with diverse needs that experience difficulty in academic and social learning in educational environments. “For a variety of reasons these learners find difficulty in coping and adapting to the regular process in the mainstream classroom” (Paulsen, 2004:25).

Mainstreaming is a system by which learners with disabilities participate in general education classrooms to the extent it is appropriate to meet their needs (Vaughn, Bos & Schumm, 2000)

Learners experiencing barriers to learning are those learners who due to a wide range of factors cannot learn effectively. Barriers to learning are factors in the education system or in the learner that may stop the learner from being able to learn effectively (Department of Education, 1997b).

Outcomes Based Education (OBE) is a system of education that is concerned with establishing the conditions and opportunities within the education system that enable and encourage all students to achieve specified outcomes (Spady, 1994).



1.8 Terminology

The language used throughout this research is generally compatible with the language of the new curriculum. The term *learners with special needs* is often used in this research, particularly in Chapters 2 and 3, because it is the one that is used in most of the literature. *Learners who experience barriers to learning* is the preferred term in White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001). It is important to note that some of the literature included does not make use of the language of the new curriculum. To make reading easy, I have included below a list of

many of the terms that were used which reflect the old vocabulary and have included terms that are used in South African policy documents.

Teacher : educator

Pupil or student : learner

Learners with special needs or learners with disabilities : learners who experience barriers to learning

Mainstream or regular : ordinary

The terms *White*, *Coloured*, *Indian*, and *Black* are used only insofar as they reflect on the previous apartheid system in education. This in no way reflects my personal views.



1.9 Key words

Inclusive education

Mainstream classrooms

Special learning needs

Barriers to learning

Accommodating difference

Learning-support strategies

CHAPTER 2

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief history and explanation of the phenomenon of inclusive education, its characteristics, and the principles upon which it is based. This is followed by a section that reviews recent specialised education changes and general education changes in South Africa. The final part of the chapter consists of a discussion on the present and continuing debates around inclusion.

2.2 Historical overview



2.2.1 International developments within special education

Disability has been and still is a universal phenomenon. In many societies, those perceived to be ‘different’ have been rejected and marginalised. Society, in general, first perceived people with disabilities as a social threat. These attitudes resulted in the institutionalisation of many people with disabilities. During the period characterised by the ‘charity’ discourse, many special schools and other settings were established outside the ordinary structures of education (Oliver, 1988).

What is consistent in the literature is that in an effort to assist children with disabilities, children were sorted into categories and placed in separate ‘special’ schools. This

ultimately led to the development of two separate systems of education within countries: regular and special education. The rationale for having two parallel systems of education was subsequently questioned and, as research and various literatures began giving more insight into special education, the foundations of special education began to crumble.

Ainscow (1991); Jenkinson (1997); and Sebba, Byers, and Rose (1993) summarise the core weaknesses of special education as follows:

It was presupposed that children who qualified for special education had something wrong with them that made it difficult for them to participate in the regular social curriculum.

Children with disabilities were labelled and excluded from the mainstream of society. Special education was accused of legalising racial segregation, as unfair methods of identification and assessment led to a disproportionate number of ethnic minorities being placed in special schools.

The presence of specialists in special education encouraged regular classroom teachers to pass on to others the responsibility for children they regarded as special.

Resources that might otherwise have been used to provide more flexible and responsive forms of schooling were channelled in separate provision.

As modern states emerged, governments, educationists, and human rights lobbyists found it necessary to respond to the ongoing debate around disability, as there was an increasing social awareness of how people with special needs had been excluded from education and from society (Leadbetter & Leadbetter, 1993).

The development of special education has involved a series of stages during which education systems have explored different ways of responding to children with disabilities (Booth & Ainscow, 1998). 'In the 1960s Scandinavian countries initiated the

integration movement to accommodate learners with disabilities in regular schools” (Dyson & Forlin, 1999 cited in Waghid & Le Grange, 2000:93). In the late 1960’s and early 1970’s disability was no longer considered a mental and physical handicap whereby learners with disabilities had to be segregated from regular mainstream classrooms (Wolfensberger, 1972). From the early 1970’s, many countries like Britain, America, Canada, and Italy introduced legislation and passed laws that made it obligatory for schools to provide education for all children with special educational needs (Watts, 1990). It was at this time that educators began to question and theorise as to how best school services could be organised differently to include all children (Booth & Ainscow, 1998; Porter & Richter, 1991). Segregated special education came to be seen as simply part of the oppressive social apparatus through which people with disabilities were excluded from social participation (Oliver, 1998). Educationists now moved into an era in which disabilities were no longer viewed as a handicap that required people to be segregated from the mainstream of society.

According to Sage (1993), mainstreaming evolved from two parallel school systems: general education and special education. In his discussion, Sage (1993) points out that there is an underlying assumption of inequity between the two systems wherein special education just became smaller and separate from general education. In mainstreaming, a student with special educational needs is educated partially in a special education program but, to the maximum extent possible, is educated in the general education program (Idol, 1997). “Mainstreaming is related to the concept integration, which both reinterpreted and extended the issues raised by special needs approaches in mainstream

classes” (Engelbrecht, 1999:8). According to Farrell (2001:7), “Integration typically referred solely to the type of setting into which a child might be placed, mainstream class, unit resource base, etc”. Dyson, (1997) cited in Engelbrecht, 1999:8) wrote that “Although integration involved more extensive participation of learners with special needs in age-appropriate activities with non-disabled peers, significant instruction time in separate settings still prevailed”.

Kirk, (1941) cited in Möwes, (1999:62) acknowledged as early as 1941 the value of in integrating regular and special education. He wrote,

Actually the education of exceptional children is not wholly the responsibilities of any group of teachers... It is hoped that in the future all special class teachers will not only be responsible for the education of children in their classroom but will take on the added responsibility of contributing their knowledge and special skills to the regular classroom teacher... who has many exceptional children in the classroom.



2.2.2 Inclusive education: international perspectives

UNESCO’s Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) provided the clearest and most unequivocal call for inclusive education, its guiding principle being that ordinary schools should accommodate all children. Since the inception of inclusive education, bookstores, libraries, and Internet sites have been saturated with information on this topic. The following definitions are noteworthy:

“Inclusive education is a term used to describe educational policies and practices that uphold the right of learners with disabilities to belong and learn in mainstream education” (Green, 2001:4).

Inclusion, “refers to the extent to which a school or community welcomes all people as full members of the group and values them for the contribution which they make” (Farrell, 2001:7).

“With inclusion, students come to the regular classroom with all the specialised services they require. Every child has unique learning needs requiring an educational programme implemented to take into account the wide diversity of their characteristics and needs” (Knight, 1999:3).

“Inclusion is conceptualised as a shared value of accommodating all learners in a unified system of education, empowering them to become caring, competent and contributing citizens in an inclusive, changing and diverse society” (Engelbrecht, 1999 cited in Swart & Pettipher, 2000:76).

- Dyson, (2001:11), claims, that three commonalities can be found within the various definitions of inclusion, namely, “(a) a commitment to building a more just society; (b) a commitment to building a more equitable education system; and (c) a conviction that extending the responsiveness of mainstream schools to learner diversity will assist with the actualisation of these commitments”.
- Inclusive education embodies a number of factors: “(1) education needs to be non-discriminatory in terms of disability, culture and gender; (2) it involves all students in a community with no exceptions; (3) students should have equal rights to access the culturally valued curriculum as full-time members of age appropriate regular classroom; and (4) there should be an emphasis on diversity rather than assimilation” (Ballard, 1997 cited in Carrington, 1999:259).



2.3 Principles and characteristics of inclusive education

The principles upon which inclusive education is based can be seen as a continuum of the definitions presented above. The following descriptors, as set out by Giangreco, Baumgart, and Doyle (1995), in Giangreco (1997:194), detail what inclusive education means:

- All students are welcomed in general education classes in their local schools.
- Students are educated in classes where the number of those with and without disabilities is proportional to the local population.
- Students are educated with peers in the same age groupings available to those without disability labels.
- Students with varying characteristics and abilities participate in shared educational experiences while pursuing individually appropriate learning outcomes with necessary supports and accommodations.

Shared educational experiences take place in settings predominantly frequented by people without disabilities.

Educational experiences are designed to enhance individually determined valued life outcomes for students and, therefore, seek an individualised balance between the academic/functional and social/personal aspects of schooling.

Engelbrecht, Eloff, Newmark, and Kachelhoffer (1997:82) outline the elements of inclusive education. They are as follow:

The base element for inclusion consists of the development of a philosophy that incorporates a clear vision for children and administrative support that will assure that adequate resources are available.

The second element includes establishing parent involvement in the inclusion process, as well as preparing school personnel for collaborative consultation and providing the information they need to understand the needs of learners with special educational needs.

Another element essential for appropriate and successful inclusion involves assessment of learners' strengths and needs, and the adaptation of the curriculum to the needs of those learners with special educational needs.



Supporting the conceptual ideas presented above is a body of research completed by Giangreco (1997), cited in Rose (2001:148), who identified common features of schools where inclusion has succeeded. These include:

- Collaborative teamwork
- Shared framework
- Family involvement
- General education ownership
- Clear role relationships amongst professionals
- Effective use of supportive staff
- Meaningful individual education plans (IEP's)
- Procedures for evaluating effectiveness.

Ainscow (1999:219), in his research, identified what he calls possible 'ingredients' for the development of effective schools which reach out to all students:

Use existing practices and knowledge as starting points for development
See differences as opportunities for learning rather than problems to be fixed
Scrutinize barriers to pupil participation
Make effective use of available resources to support learning
Develop a language of practice amongst teachers; and
Create conditions in schools that encourage a degree of risk-taking.

Similarly, Westwood (1997:3) and others like Andrews and Lupart (1993) cited in Westwood (1997); Clark, Dyson, Millward, and Skidmore (1997); Murphy (1996); and Thomas, Walke, and Webb (1998) suggest that the following elements are required if students with special needs are to be successfully included in regular classrooms:

Strong leadership on the part of the school principal
The development of a whole-school policy supportive of inclusion
The development of positive attitudes toward students with disabilities
A commitment on the part of all staff to work collaboratively and to share problems, responsibilities, and expertise
The development of support networks among staff, and links with outside agencies and services
Adequate resourcing in terms of materials and personnel
Regular training and professional development for staff
Close liaison with parents
Adaptation of curriculum and teaching methods.

It is clear from the above references that inclusive education first and foremost accommodates diversity. Since its inception, inclusive education has evolved into a movement which challenges exclusionary policies and practices and has gained ground and become a favoured adopted approach in addressing the learning needs of all students in regular schools and classrooms.

Inclusive education is no longer considered a means of only integrating learners with mental and physical disabilities into mainstream schools, but rather a discourse that can provide education for all and equal access to education for all learners. (Waghid & Le Grange, 2000:92)

Kristen, Loican and Onen, (2003) presented teachers in Uganda with a number of questions to gauge their attitudes, perceptions and knowledge about trends towards inclusion. The issue of diversity was addressed and 83% of the respondents felt that diversity among learners could enrich all learners. Teachers felt that learners learn from each other, that diversity promotes social interaction and participation and that it enables the use of varied teaching methods.

2.4 Arguments for and against inclusive education

The following points illustrate the on-going debate concerning inclusive education.

2.4.1 Arguments for inclusive education



Lipsky and Gartner (1989) maintain that there is no compelling body of evidence demonstrating that segregated special education programmes have significant benefits for students. On the contrary, there is substantial and growing evidence that suggests the opposite is true.

The main argument during the inclusive movement has centred on the issue of human rights. Farrell (2001) and Mittler (2000) agree that it is the basic right of all pupils to attend their local mainstream school and be fully included in its academic and social processes. This argument has also been subsumed within the Salamanca Statement and adopted by many inclusion lobbyists.

Instances of prejudice and discrimination have always been linked to disability. The Western Cape Forum for Inclusive Education (2000), in its newsletter, explains that inclusive education facilitates the breakdown of prejudice towards people with disabilities and teaches learners to value one another for who they are. Solity and Bull (1993) argues that labelling children encourages discriminatory practices, such as seating children separately and withdrawing them from their lessons from the mainstream classrooms, and this further intensifies the notion of difference.

Inclusion lobbyists feel strongly that an inclusive environment is more like the real world that students with disabilities will live in when they finish school. This is achieved by exposing learners to a broader experience of life and giving them the opportunity to help each other. The Western Cape Forum for Inclusive Education (2000) believes that “Children who have been included at their local school are more likely to be included into their community as adults. They are better equipped for adult life and less dependent on society as a whole”. This is supported by studies that Lewis (1996), cited in Leyden and Miller (1998), has undertaken. He reported that children in inclusive classrooms demonstrate increased acceptance and appreciation of diversity, develop better communication skills, show greater development in moral and ethical principles, create warm and caring friendships, and demonstrate increased self-esteem.

This is further reiterated by Baker, Wang, and Walberg (1994) and Banerji and Dail (1995) who believe that self-esteem and feelings of self-worth are increased because students with disabilities are less likely to be identified as ‘slow’ by their peers or feel

stigmatised. Stainback and Stainback (1992) state that in an inclusive environment, students with disabilities have more time to make and sustain friendships with their non-disabled peers.

2.4.2 Disadvantages of inclusive education

Many see the educator as central to the development of all learners and they are, therefore, concerned that students with disabilities will take up too much of the teacher's time. Some educators' concerns and reservations with regards to their ability, training, and job security are discussed below.

Forlin, (2004) cites a number of authors who claim that there is no unequivocal evidence that inclusion produces better outcomes for children with disabilities. There is on the other hand evidence indicating that children without disabilities in an inclusion situation can be disadvantaged by having reduced interaction with their teacher.

Shanker, (1994-1995) cited in Forlin, (2004:186), highlights that,

There is a strong current of thought that educational inclusion may be favoured by governments as a cost-cutting exercise and concern that the band wagon effect may lead to children with disabilities being 'dumped' whilst poor implementation of strategies required to achieve inclusionary education results in destructive outcomes.

According to Knight (1999:5), "the notion of inclusion is being met with some resistance from regular classroom teachers worried about the impact on their teaching and on other students in the classroom". Kenny (1996); and Vaughn, Schumm, Jallard, Slusher and Saumell (1996), cited in Knight (1999:4), found in their research that "some teachers

perceived the movement toward inclusion as threatening and therefore it is to be expected that inclusion will meet a great deal of covert resistance from teachers”. Another concern is that special-education teaching positions may be reduced as students move into integrated classrooms (McLaughlin & Warren, 1994). The lack of job security further adds to the uncertainty that surrounds inclusion.

Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (1999) cited in Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, (2004:126) explain that,

Recent research illustrates some of the difficulties currently encountered by students and teachers within English schools. These include concerns about how to respond to bilingual learners within the national literacy and numeracy strategies; how to improve the performance of boys, particularly those from minority ethnic groups; how to integrate students with disabilities into mainstream classroom activities and what to do in relation to students categorised as having emotional and behavioural difficulties.



This highlights that inclusion has not been embraced and that teachers are finding it difficult to accommodate learners in the mainstream.

Studies by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) concluded that teachers did support inclusion but felt a lack of necessary time, skills, training, and resources to implement inclusive factors. This is consistent with the research work undertaken by UNESCO (1986), cited in Kisanji (1995:15).

Their findings showed that regular classroom teachers were willing to take on the responsibility for special needs children, but were not confident whether they had the skills to carry out that task. Most teachers felt they needed training in the special needs field.

The research of Conway and Gow (1988); Gersten, Walker, and Darch (1988); and Schumm and Vaughn (1992) produced similar results. They discovered that general education teachers often feel inadequately prepared to teach students with disabilities.

This supports the work of Zigmond and Baker, (1995) cited in Rose, (2001) who found that many teachers made few or no adaptations for students with learning disabilities.

Forlin (2001:235), in her research, identified potential stressors for regular classroom teachers. The results indicated that teachers did not appear to be overly stressed by inclusion. What it did show was that, “Issues that related to a teacher’s professional competence and the behaviour of the child with the intellectual disability were the most stressful for teachers”.



Financing plays a huge role in the ongoing development of education. Some educators and parents fear that inclusion practices will drain resources within the system, short-changing students in regular classes. Others fear that inclusion can be used as a means of saving money at the expense of students who need specialised educational services (McLaughlin & Warren, 1994).

The debate on inclusive education will again be addressed later in this chapter. Here, the focus will be on South African perspectives on inclusion and educators’ experiences of inclusion. The following section gives a brief account of the development of general education and of special education in South Africa.

2.5 Special needs education in South Africa

2.5.1 General education under apartheid

Separate, segregated, or apartheid education meant that education was based on ethnicity (Lemmer & Badenhorst, 1997). Education for each population group was separate and far from equal. “There is a need to understand that the apartheid system categorised and officially classified people in terms of ‘race’. Four major races were identified: White, Indian, Coloured, and African” (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000:316).

The system of apartheid was formally introduced in the 1950’s, and its sole purpose was to turn the black child’s point of identification away from the common society towards his/her own black community. The aim, as the Minister of Bantu Education articulated it, was to keep a Bantu child a Bantu child (Giliomee, 1983).

The government implemented the apartheid ideology within the economic, educational, and government infrastructure. The ideologies of apartheid were clearly propagated within education with the formation of the House of Assembly (Whites), House of Representatives (Coloureds), and House of Delegates (Indians). The House of Assembly, the House of Representatives, and the House of Delegates had ministerial representation in Parliament and a bottom-up approach concerning the regulation of education (Lemmer & Badenhorst, 1997). They could also determine their ‘own affairs’ regarding all aspects of education. However, Black people were not granted the right to establish their ‘own affairs’ and were controlled by the central government (Behr, 1984). Within this

education system, 17 separate education departments were established to cater for all South Africans on racial grounds (Roberts, 1998). There were, therefore, distinct disparities between White, Coloured, Indian, and Black forms of education with regards to finance, training, support services, and implementation. “The old education system catered for passive learners, was driven by examinations, often entailing learning parrot-fashion, and was characterised by a syllabus that was content-based and broken down into convenient compartments or subjects”. The Department of Education (1998:5)

Special needs education in South Africa needs to be seen within the wider context of education under apartheid. The following section addresses this issue.

2.5.2 Special needs education in South Africa



The history of special-needs education in South Africa can be traced back to the 1900's when the first schools for handicapped children were church schools for the deaf and blind. These institutes were purely charitable organisations which admitted both White and Coloured children; however, the latter were schooled in a different section (Behr, 1984). The South African government did not formally recognise special education until 1928 when Act 20 was passed. Through this Act, a firm commitment was made to the establishment and development of White special schools (Du Toit, 1996). Therefore, the segregation of learners on the basis of race was extended to incorporate segregation on the basis of disability. Apartheid special schools were thus organised according to two segregating criteria, race and disability (Department of Education, 2001).

Under the apartheid laws, schooling was compulsory for White children but not compulsory for Coloured, Indian, and Black children. The implication for special-needs education was that Black students had no access or very little access to some form of special education because there was no obligation by government to provide for it. It thus became the role of churches to establish and cater for the needs of Black children with disabilities (Du Toit, 1996). Compulsory schooling for White children with disabilities ensured that these learners would obtain some form of skill, leaving Black students with little or nothing to carry them through the rest of their lives (Roberts, 1998).

Very few special schools existed, and they were limited to admitting learners according to rigidly applied categories (Department of Education, 2001). Similarly, special-needs education was fragmented, not only by the apartheid laws, but also by legislation and policy that separated 'ordinary' learners from learners categorised as having 'special needs' (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000). "This system clearly reflected and enforced a philosophy of exclusion and segregation" (Swart & Pettipher, 2000:78).

South Africa, in keeping with international educational developments, adopted a medical model. Naicker (1999:30) explains that "the medical model was based on the assumption that learners were deficient and their deficiencies were pathological". Although South Africa kept up with international developments, the government ensured that the principles of apartheid ideology were interwoven in all sectors of education. This was evident with the separate establishment of the Athlone School for the Blind, which was

founded for coloured children, a separate school for blind Indian children, and the Worcester School for Coloured children with epilepsy. A medical and mental diagnosis and treatment model was introduced to White special schools in 1948. This model focused on the individual deficit theory and viewed the individual as a helpless being (Naicker, 1999). “Later the government distanced themselves from the above model and passed the Educational Services Act 41, which stipulated that education should be provided in accordance with the ability, aptitude, and interest of pupils and the needs of the country” (Marias & Kirsten, 1998:3). The above Act was, to a degree, a victory for special education as it gave some recognition to disabled learners instead of regarding them as ‘helpless beings’. By 1966 only nine special schools were established for Black children with disabilities, a number which was in sharp contrast with the number of White special schools (Horrell, 1968).



Concrete evidence pertaining to the plight of Black students with special needs only emerged in the mid 1980's. This highlighted the discrepancy between the races with regards to availability of services and the inadequacies within their own structures due to fiscal constraint and a lack of resources. A summary of the data gathered is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Development of Special Schools and Support from 1985 – 1990

DATE		REFERENCE
1985	0,1% of Black students accommodated in special schools.	Donald (1989), cited in Skuy & Partington (1990).
1987	Panel for Identification, Diagnosis, and Assistance introduced for Black learners. The system was hampered by, <i>inter alia</i> , a lack of training and support materials and under qualified staff.	Donald & Hlongwane (1989); Green, Donald, & MacIntosh (1992).
1987	35 special schools serving Black children with disabilities and only served, primarily, severely disabled children	Heyns (1986).
1990	37% of all special schools were in White education departments 29% of all special schools were in Black education departments	Donald (1996).



The following reports and investigations are discussed as they impacted greatly on the development and recognition of learners with special needs in South Africa. The reports and investigations are drawn primarily from Lomofsky, Thomson, Gouws, and Engelbrecht (1998), and Du Toit (1996). The first report of significance on special education in South Africa was the Murray report of 1969. It was an inquiry into children with minimal brain dysfunction. The report made recommendations for specialised services, which were for White children only and thus excluded many children of other races. It was felt by many educationists that this, amongst many other reports written, did not alleviate the problem within special-needs education, as illustrated by Behr (1978), who highlighted that by 1976, provision was made for only 1 out of 500 White pupils with disabilities.

In 1980, as a result of the ongoing turmoil in education, the government commissioned the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) to investigate the entire education system with a view to providing equal education for all. Its findings, published in the De Lange Report (1981), made great strides in the development of special education and also created public awareness around the conditions of Black school children. The De Lange Report (1981) advocated a single unitary education department and recommended a move away from the strict categorisation and labelling of children with disabilities towards the broader focus on children with special educational needs. It also deplored the inadequate facilities for Blacks, and was concerned with the needs of the learners who were environmentally deprived. The report emphasised a shift from the medical model. However, the recommendations of this report were not formally adopted by the government and seem to have had, at the time, little impact on the practice of special education in South Africa.



Subsequently, the Education for the Black Disabled Report (HSRC, 1987) was published. This report highlighted high incidences of disability in Black population groups. It was concluded that this could be attributed, to a considerable extent, to factors such as poverty, lack of access to medical and healthcare facilities, ignorance, and traditional birth customs.

In anticipation of what seemed to be inevitable - the emergence of South Africa's first democratic state following national, non-racial elections - investigations into education and other fields of government were initiated. The National Education Policy

Investigation (NEPI) (1992) “became a foundational document upon which much of existing (though by no means all) curriculum policy is based. What NEPI (1992) did was to provide a broad values framework for thinking about democratic education policy after apartheid” (Jansen, 1999:4). It also provided greater insight into the plight of learners with special needs, and presented government with viable strategies to redress inadequacies of the past. The report clearly articulated the shortcomings of the ‘auxiliary’ or psychological services and school health services. Lazarus and Donald (1995:2) summarise these inadequacies as follows:

- Marginalisation of services in terms of the general curriculum, resulting in a lack of status and resource allocation.
- Fragmentation and lack of administrative and professional co-ordination between services
- Lack of national clarity and focus on the nature and orientation of services
- Centralised and non-participatory decision making with regard to children's special needs
- Service inequalities and inconsistencies, particularly between the different racially segregated departments.

The investigation also highlighted that African schools received minimal if any access to support services. The report also identified five principles for education in general, which had particular significance for the education of learners with special educational needs. They included non-racism and non-sexism with the underlying principles of non-discrimination and democracy, with specific reference to the principle of representation and participation by parents, teachers, pupils, and other relevant parties and unitary systems.

As in most countries abroad, the South African history of special-needs education, as discussed above, can be summarised as a succession of lay, charity, and rights approaches to education. Fulcher (1989), cited in Green (2001), refers to these different discourses. She explains that the lay course was characterised by ignorance and prejudice, the charity discourse viewed the disabled as victims, and the medical discourse considered disability to be an abnormal and irremediable condition. The above discourses all imply that the existence of disability requires and justifies exclusion from the mainstream of educational, social, and economic life. The following section on general education and special education in a democratic South Africa introduces the *rights* approach, which emphasises equality and full citizenship.

2.6 General education and special education in a democratic South Africa



Throughout the years and leading up to South Africa's first democratic elections, many authors, researchers, and disability organisations came out strongly in support of change within special education. The 1994 elections heralded South Africa's transition to a democracy. The first democratic elections instilled in many South Africans a sense of hope and euphoria. This was especially true for those many organisations that lobbied for equal and high quality education for learners with special needs. Since the elections, there has been a visible movement from resistance to social reconstruction. In retrospect, one can see that "the new South African Government has been committed to transforming educational policy to address the imbalances and neglect of the past and to bring the country in line with international standards of recognition of human rights"

(Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000:317). According to Naicker (2000:3-4), “A central feature of the transformation process from an apartheid society to a democratic society has been the emergence and development of new education policies that correspond with political and social practices within a democratic milieu”.

Policies of significance to special-needs education will be addressed in the following section. South Africa’s policy-making was complex and characterised by a multiplicity of commissions, working groups, task teams, and committees. Some of the key documents, policies, and legislation are all listed in the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education. Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, (2001) and include: White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, March, 1995); The Organisation, Governance, and Funding of Schools: White Paper Two (Department of Education November 1996); White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (Office of the Deputy President, 1997); The South African Schools Act (November, 1996); the Bill of Rights (1996), the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (1995), and the establishment of the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) (1997a).

The White Paper on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa: First Steps to Develop a New System (1995) was the first policy document on education and training by South Africa’s new government. It reflected the key ideas of integration and competency as elements of a system-wide education restructuring ambition (Jansen,

1999). The values and principles underlined in this document were devised to direct national policy for the reconstruction and development of education. They include the following: the basic right to education and training of good quality, open access to education, redress for educational inequalities, a unitary education system, and the total development of all pupils, which will encompass academic and vocational as well as broad psychological, health, and social needs. A first step within the new dispensation was that the 17 different education systems were reorganised into nine provincial education departments, under a unified national education department (Lomofsky, 1999a).

The developments within general education had the following positive ramifications for special education. In the South African Constitution, the education section of the Bill of Rights states that “all learners have the right to basic education including adult basic education and further education” (Republic of South Africa, 1996:291b).

The South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) legislates for compulsory education for learners. Additionally, the Minister will determine the ages for compulsory attendance at school for learners with special educational needs. The South African Schools Act not only assures the rights of learners with special needs, but also abolished compulsory exclusion. Section 5 (2) of the Schools Act stipulates that a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way. Thus the rights of all children are protected, including children

with special educational needs, by ensuring that seven years of primary education and a further two years in secondary school are compulsory.

Not only does the state, through the Constitution, provide access to schooling for learners with special needs, but also once at school, the learners are to be accommodated. Section 23(5) of the Schools Act (1996) stipulates that the governing body of an ordinary public school which provides education to learners with special needs must, where practically possible, co-opt a person or persons with expertise regarding the special education needs of such learners. And section 30(2) states that a governing body of an ordinary public school which provides education to learners with special needs must establish a committee on special needs (Republic of South Africa, 1996a).



The development of new policies and the implementation of new legislation were in line with South Africa's transformation process. In response to the urgent plea from policy makers, educators, and human rights lobbyists and the alarming statistics relating to the state of education in South Africa, the Ministry of Education implemented Outcomes Based Education (OBE). The beliefs and assumptions of OBE have formed the philosophical basis of South Africa's education transformation. These beliefs have, in turn, formed the basis for the systematic and structured development of a new curriculum in South Africa, namely Curriculum 2005.

William Spady (1994) is regarded as the architect of Outcomes Based Education. He defines OBE as clearly focusing and organizing an education system around what is

essential for all students to be able to succeed at the end of their learning experiences (Spady, 1994).

“In OBE the outcomes of the learning experience are clearly stated at the beginning so that both the learners and teachers are aware of the goals and expectations” (Spady & Schlebusch, 1999:26). These outcomes, which guide the teaching, learning, and assessment process, describe the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that learners must acquire. OBE is a learner-centred, result-orientated approach to learning which, according to Spady and Schlebusch (1999:29), is based on the following beliefs:

- What and whether learners learn successfully is more important than exactly when, how, and from whom they learn it.
- Schools exist to ensure that all learners are equipped with the knowledge, competence and qualities needed to be successful after they exit the education system.
- Schools should be organised, structured and operated so that all their learners can achieve these life performance outcomes.
- All learners can learn and succeed, but not on the same day, in the same way.
- Successful learning promotes more successful learning, just as poor learning fosters more poor learning.
- Schools control key conditions and opportunities that directly affect successful school learning.

In 2000, a Review Committee on Curriculum 2005 was established to investigate the effectiveness and implementation of Curriculum 2005 and to make recommendations regarding some of the difficulties that had been experienced (Department of Education, 2000:10-13). The Review Committee proposed a revised and streamlined curriculum within a broad outcomes-based framework to be implemented within manageable time-frames.

“The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-9 (Schools) released in 2002 consists of eight Learning Area Statements, each with an outline of the main Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards that will enable the Learning Outcomes” (Department of Education, 2002:2-3). The revised Curriculum Statement gives teachers much more guidance as to the requirements of the curriculum and assessment criteria, and is written in more accessible language than the original document.

Roberts (1998) explains that the central objective of OBE in South Africa is premised on recognition that traditional methods of teaching and learning adopted in the past did not sufficiently equip learners with the skills and knowledge they would require to make a productive contribution to the economic development of the country. OBE, which underpins the efforts to reshape the curriculum, has since 1996 become an important component of education policy in South Africa. The new unitary system of education makes the provision of special education and support services on an equitable basis, a requirement. This was a daunting task especially in view of the situation in both mainstream and special education.

...there has been a tremendous shortage of professionals, including educational psychologists, particularly in rural areas in South Africa. Together with a focus on an applications-only approach, individually-focused interventions have prevented professionals in support services from responding appropriately to the needs of teachers and learners in an inclusive educational context. (Department of Education, 1997 cited in Engelbrecht, Forlin, Eloff & Swart, 2001:81)

Table 2, below, represents a collection of data and outlines the conditions within education. It documents the development of education after the first democratic elections. It highlights, among others, issues around financing, student numbers, pass rates, and establishment of special schools.

Table 2

Conditions within education from 1980 – 2001

Date			References
1980's	1980 - 19% of all grade 12's repeat grade 12 1990 – 40% of all grade 12's repeat grade 12		Read Education Trust (1998) cited in Lomofsky, (1999a:3)
1982	For every 1000 Black pupils who began school in 1982 400 completed Std. 8 390 completed matric exams 140 passed matric & qualified for university entrance	For every 1000 White pupils who began school in 1982 920 completed Std. 8 8780 passed matric 720 qualified for university admission	Cited in Pape, 1998
1984 – 1990	Drop out rate of Grade one's between 1984 and 1990 – 1,3 million <i>Pretoria News</i> (1998.09.01)		cited in Lomofsky, 1999a
1985	0.1 % of total Black school going population was enrolled in special education facilities 4% of White school going population was enrolled in special education facilities		Donald & Hlongwane, 1989
1989	In Black education 1:30 000 ratio of psychologists to pupils		Donald & Hlongwane, 1989
1990	14969 White pupils in special schools 9811 Black pupils in special schools 5580 Indian pupils in special schools 6558 Coloured pupils in special schools		Meerkotter (1998)
1990	37% of special schools in White education departments 29,6% of special schools in African education departments		Donald, 1996
1990	25 000 children accommodated in special or adaptation classes in White education departments 70 children accommodated in special or adaptation classes in the Department of Education and Training		Donald, 1996
1990	89 special schools providing specialised service for Whites 20 special schools providing specialised service for Indians 60 special schools providing specialised service for Coloured 71 special schools providing specialised service for over 7,5 million African children enrolled at school		Donald, 1996

1992	For every 100 children with special needs 70 - White 17 - Coloured 11 - Indian 2 - Black	Donald, (In Press) cited in Green, Donald & MacIntosh, 1992
1992	1:19 teacher:child ratio in White schools 1:40 - 1:60 teacher:child ratio in Black schools	Crouch (1998)
1994	100 students in a classroom in schools in rural areas insufficient textbooks no teaching aids poor toilet facilities no sporting facilities	Roberts (1998)
1995	Some Black and Coloured schools plagued by: gang violence drug abuse theft vandalism	Meerkotter, (1998)
1996	Central Statistics Service confirmed - 80% of black disabled children live in extreme poverty	Government Census 1996
1997	Rationalisation implemented; this did not benefit disadvantaged communities	Meerkotter (1998)
1997	Western Cape Province - 82 special schools Gauteng Province - 59 special schools Northern Province - 9 special schools	Department of Education, 1997a
1997	88% households in an urban advantaged area reported to have received support services 32% of disadvantaged area reported to have access to support services	Dept of Edu, 1997a
1998	45% of grade 1 learners underage	EMIS, Dept of Edu. 1998
1998	12% to 15% of learners in a 'normal' society experience learning barriers 5% of learners are gifted who are also sometimes regarded as learners experiencing barriers to learning	Theron, 1998
2001	380 special schools serve 64200 learners with special needs	Dept of Edu. (2001)
2001	6,5% national total incidence figure for disabilities 0,52% total number of students with disabilities who attend special schools	Dept of Edu. (2001:15)
2001	In the Eastern Cape 17,39% of population is disabled 0,28% of learners are enrolled in special schools	Dept of Edu. (2001:15)
2001	Expenditure per annum on learners with special needs Gauteng - R11,049 Western Cape - R28,635 Free State - R22,627	Dept of Edu. (2001:15)
2001	W. Cape -- 17 education support centres - school population: 891000 K. Natal -- 7 education support centres - school population: 1505000	Dept of Edu. (2001:15)

From the above data, the following deductions can be drawn. Within special education, there are discrepancies with respect to the number of special schools, number of learners, and expenditure. There are stark disparities between the number of learners accommodated in special schools and the overall incidence of disabilities. The varied expenditure from province to province not only demonstrates inefficiency in the use of resources, but also an absence of a uniform strategy and national norms for learners with disabilities. The above data also highlight that there are discrepancies within mainstream education. The statistics suggest an alarming number of learners with special needs in mainstream education, vast discrepancies in teacher:child ratio, a lack of resources and facilities in rural schools, and an increased culture of violence in schools. These suggest that many teachers need to be retrained to meet the diverse needs of learners, confronting them in class every day (Department of Education, 2001).



2.6.1 Causes of special educational needs in South Africa

There have been many inquiries into determining the cause of such high figures relating to special education needs, as discussed previously. It was concluded by academics that special educational needs arose not only from intrinsic factors as previously assumed, but also from extrinsic factors.

In the White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995), the term *learners with special educational needs* includes learners whose special educational needs arise from extrinsic as well as intrinsic factors. These learners are believed to

comprise 40% of the South African population (Engelbrecht, et al 1999). It is interesting to note that throughout the history of special education, special educational needs were assumed to have stemmed from intrinsic factors. With the progression of special education also came this progression from solely intrinsic factors to the inclusion of extrinsic factors, which has specific bearing on a South African context. This discussion is taken further below.

Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, (1997:64-64) presents the range of special needs. They explain that,


Firstly, there is a set of differences and special needs which can be seen as primarily 'external' in origin, and the result of disadvantage in particular social and educational contexts... Thus influenced mainly by the social system as a whole, conditions of poverty can cause special needs...

Secondly, there is a set of problems and special needs where 'external' influences are powerful. However they are almost always, and equally, mixed in with 'internal' influences... It is only through understanding the complex relationship of individuals to family, peers, classroom, school, community, and the social system as a whole, and how these influences interact, that these problems and the resulting special needs can be effectively addressed...

Third, there is a set of differences and special needs which could be understood as disabilities and learning difficulties... the origins of individual disabilities and difficulties are mainly related to the 'internal' physical and psychological systems of the person.

Similarly, Cooper, McCaul, Hamilton, Delvare, Moonsamy, and Mueller (1990) highlight the distinction between intrinsic special educational needs and extrinsic special educational needs. Intrinsic disabilities are of a physical or neurological nature. Extrinsic special educational need is structurally (e.g. shortages of schools, classrooms, teacher under qualification, lack of essential materials and resources, and high pupil: teacher

ratios) and systemically (e.g. language of instruction, curriculum used, teaching methodology) created.

Donald (1993) writes that although it is difficult to define the precise extent of learners with extrinsically generated special educational needs, it is reflected in excessively high drop-out rates, failure rates, and evidence of widespread underachievement in relation to potential, particularly in African education. There is a well-established relationship between poverty, malnutrition, and other forms of environmental disadvantage and intellectual deficit, as highlighted by Donald (1993); Richter and Griesel (1994); and Wiesinger-Ferris (1989). There are multiple interactions of socio-economic factors in disadvantaged communities, which also influence the prevalence of disability. Donald (1993) points out that factors relating to  poverty, health, and healthcare access interact to produce disproportionately high incidence rates of disability and special educational need. South Africa's heritage of social and educational disadvantage under the system of apartheid lends substance to this argument. It has inevitably created a very large group of children with extrinsically generated special educational needs.

This is reflected in the findings of the NCSNET/NCESS (Department of Education, 1997a:12). The document defines barriers to learning and development as factors within the learner or the system that "...prevent the learner from being able to engage in or sustain an ideal process of learning". These factors "...lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity, which lead to learning breakdown or which prevent learners from accessing educational provision...".The Department of Education (2002:6)

identifies four categories of barriers to learning and development: systemic, societal, inappropriate pedagogical, or physiological barriers.

The systemic barriers include a lack of basic and appropriate learning support materials, inadequate facilities at schools, overcrowded classrooms, etc. Societal barriers are derived from severe poverty, late enrolment at schools, illiterate parents, etc. Barriers to learning created by inappropriate pedagogy include inappropriate and unfair assessment methods, insufficient support of the teacher, etc. Physiological barriers to learning that are located within the learner may be derived from neurological, physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities.

Thejane and Muthikrishna (2000) recognise that poverty restrains the families' ability to support their child who has special needs. They recommend that educational opportunities, systemic preventative services, as well as community-based support groups must be implemented for families to prevent the perpetuation of exclusion based on the status of learners with disabilities and their families. Gwala-Ogisi, (1990) found that there is a systematic relationship between social conditions, education competency and intellectual development. He concluded that the conditions surrounding poverty frequently resulted in handicaps such as poor cognitive development, mild retardation, learning deficiencies and emotional handicaps all of which have contributed to the present disposition of the majority of the population.

Similarly, McNamara and Moreton, (2001) believe that internal and external factors must be considered when a child with emotional and behavioural difficulties present problems in school. They include the following internal and external factors:

- Poverty, social class, ethnic group and gender might be seen as affecting the child's behaviour

- Home background, a history of physical or sexual abuse, a lack of good parenting, or serial relationships might also play a part in emotional problems
- Recent death of a parent or sibling, parental separation, or an illness or disability of someone close to the child
- Medical conditions
- Psychological conditions
- Learning difficulties

Hamilton, (2003) did a study of two schools and found that the majority of teachers at school 'A' agreed that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds might be viewed as learners with special needs. She explained that the difference in teaching context and barriers to learning at these two schools may have influenced this perspective as learners from school 'A' appeared to come from a more disadvantaged background.



The government is making attempts to address the issue of poverty through innovative programmes funded by international donors. New schools are being built, learning resources have been acquired and feeding schemes and special projects such as pilot programmes in inclusion are being implemented by the National Department of Education, (2000) cited in Paulsen, (2004).

The above situation within South Africa's general education and the disparities identified in special education set the stage for a shift from a segregated form of education (mainstreaming and special education) to a unified inclusive system.

2.7 Inclusive education in South Africa

The South African Federal Council on Disability (SAFCD), in conjunction with at least 28 other organisations and institutions in South Africa, called for the development of a single inclusive education system for South Africa. Their demand for a right to equal access to education at all levels in a single inclusive education system was not unrecognised. The South African Interim Constitution (1996c) and the Draft White Paper on Education and Training (1994) both make reference to increasing awareness around special-needs education, equal access, and non-discrimination.

It was against this background that in 1996, the Ministry of Education approved the establishment of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS). The NCSNET and the NCESS were appointed to undertake a needs analysis and make policy recommendations with respect to special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa. The Consultative Paper No. 1 on Special Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (1999) was the culmination of work by both the NCSNET and the NCESS. The central findings of this investigation are documented in the White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education System (Department of Education, 2001:5) included:

Specialised education and support have predominantly been provided for a small percentage of learners with disabilities within 'special' schools and classes; Where provided, specialised education and support were provided on a racial basis, with the best human, physical and material resources reserved for whites;

Most learners with disability have either fallen outside of the system or been 'mainstreamed by default';

The curriculum and education system as a whole have generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population, resulting in massive numbers of drop-outs, push-outs and failures; and

While some attention has been given to the schooling phase with regard to 'special needs and support', the other levels or bands of education have been seriously neglected.

The Department of Education (2001:17) views inclusion as follows.

Inclusion is about recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities. It is about supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. The focus is on teaching and learning, with the emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners. Inclusion focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs and the adaptation of and support systems available in the classroom.

The central features of an inclusive education and training system for South Africa are as follow:



A strengthened district-based education support service

The expansion of access and provision

Support for curriculum development and assessment, institutional development and quality improvement and assurance

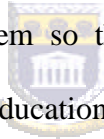
A national information, advocacy and mobilisation campaign and

A revised funding strategy. (Department of Education, 2001:25)

Inclusive education has the following implications for South African schools. The separate systems of education which presently exist must be integrated, thereby providing a range of options for education provision and support services. This, in essence, will allow learners to move from one learning context to another. Within this system, learners are now recognised as having the right to access the curriculum and the right to a curriculum which is appropriate to their learning needs. This, in turn, has implications for

the nature of school and classroom environments, the nature of the curriculum, and the roles of teachers, parents, and communities in the education of all learners (Du Toit, 1996).

Within a South African context, inclusion can take various forms and may differ from province to province (and culture group to culture group) depending on the infrastructure, personnel, teacher training, a rural or urban setting, and other factors (Roberts, 1998). Through an inclusive system, South Africa will be able to meet its constitutional obligations to provide basic education for all learners and create equity in the system. An inclusive system creates opportunities for learners who have been excluded in the past (especially learners with disabilities) to access education. The provision of support is also seen as integral to the education system so that the benefits are experienced by all learners and educators (Department of Education, 1997a).



For the successful implementation of inclusive education, the Department of Education (2001:7-8) advises that the following, amongst others, must take place:

The qualitative improvement of special schools or the learners that they serve and their phased conversion to resource centres that provide professional support to neighbourhood schools and are integrated into district support teams.

The overhauling of the process of identifying, assessing and enrolling learners in special schools, and its replacement by one that acknowledges the central role played by educators, lecturers and parents.

The mobilisation of out-of-school disabled children and youth of school-going age.

Within mainstream schooling the designation and phased conversion of approximately 500 out of 20,000 primary schools to full service schools, beginning with the 30 school districts that are part of the national district development programme.

The establishment of district-based support teams to provide a co-ordinated professional support service that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, targeting special schools and specialised settings, designated full-service and other primary schools and educational institutions, beginning with the 30 districts that are part of the national district development programme.

Inclusive education policies were devised amidst many other policies, legislation, and reports. The nature of inclusive education is such that it complements and supports the ideals of both education policies and legislation in South Africa.

The similarities between OBE and inclusive education are highlighted below:

Both inclusive education and OBE provide a clear set of expectations or learning outcomes for a single system of education that accommodates the needs of all learners.

The conditions and opportunities in both systems are such that it enables and encourages all learners to achieve essential outcomes.

They are both based on the assumption that all learners can learn and succeed, but not necessarily at the same pace and on the same day.

Ensuring that all learners are equipped with the knowledge, competence and qualities needed for success after exit from the educational system. (Naicker, 1999:92)

The curriculum has the potential to facilitate and accommodate diversity (academic linguistic or cultural) and the overcoming of barriers to learning development.

Teachers are expected to recognise and attempt to understand different abilities and cultural diversities.

Through various assessment criteria (performance indicators), educators should indicate which specific outcomes were reached for each learner. Such assessment would be formative by nature, in contrast to the previous summative nature of assessment used.

Learners with special needs (learning barriers) can now advance at their own rate in mainstream education and life skills and values which were part of special education are now in mainstream education. (Roberts, 1998: 13)

The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa has resulted in publications by many educationists, policy makers, and disability organisations, all discussing what form

inclusion should take in South Africa. This has provided greater understanding into what the government hopes to achieve. The following section will draw on the literature of various authors who present their interpretations, insight, and recommendations into the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa, with respect to support services, teacher training, and policy development.

The Department of Education, (2001), through the Education White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, has been the forerunner in presenting outlines and proposals for a framework whereby an inclusive education and training system can be established in South Africa. The Department of Education is in strong support of inclusive education because the philosophy and principles of inclusive education support the democratic values of liberty, equality, and human rights and especially appreciate diversity. These principles are further legitimised by the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996b) and the South African Schools Act of 1996 (RSA, 1996a), which assert the rights of all learners to equal access to basic and high quality education.

Engelbrecht, Naicker, and Engelbrecht (1998:100) have very clear views with regard to teacher training in an inclusive setting. Training of teachers in South Africa will need to change in order to address this new direction. This training will need to redress the previous educational disadvantages and will need to prepare teachers to be able to:

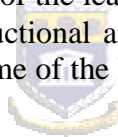
- Recognize children's special needs
- Assess learners' strengths and needs
- Adapt the curriculum to the needs of all children

Make instructional and environmental modifications to accommodate the needs of all the children
Cope with the changing role of teachers.

Nell (1996:8) discusses some other implications inclusion has for pre-service and in-service training of teachers. Appropriate preparation of all educational personnel is vitally important if inclusive education is to be successfully implemented:

In-depth knowledge of the philosophy of inclusion and the need for teachers to develop the commitment and caring required to accommodate LSEN (learners with special needs) as much as possible in regular classes during pre-service and in-service training. Teachers in mainstream schools will have to develop an inclusion mentality, which implies that they will have to accept that they have a duty to accommodate all children in their classes and not to want to exclude those with disabilities.

Teachers will have to be adequately prepared to assess special needs, to adapt curriculum content to the needs of the learners in the classrooms, to utilise special orthodidactic devices and instructional aids as well as medical and paramedical assistive devices required by some of the LSEN (learners with special needs).



2.8 South African perspectives on inclusion

Section 2.4 of this chapter summarised international debates around inclusion. The following texts, although similar, reflect discussions around inclusion in South Africa. South Africa, like many other countries, sees the intrinsic value inclusion holds for learners. Inclusion advocates that learners be given a sense of belonging and that there should be a shared belief and understanding amongst educators to support all learners. This is reiterated by the Department of Education (1997a). It is stressed that in an inclusive setting all learners feel that they belong and all kinds of different abilities are equally valued. All educators have skills and confidence to address the learning needs of

any learner who comes into their classroom. Members of the community are aware of the diversity of learning needs which exist in their community and are actively involved in creating educational opportunities for all learners in the community (Department of Education, 1997a).

Presently, within education, there is a host of problems which could impede and further complicate the successful implementation of inclusion. These difficulties are discussed below. There are some who feel that the process of educational change has been too hasty. Kallaway, Kruss, Donn, & Fataar (1997:1) point out that

In South Africa educational politics has increasingly been reduced to a matter of policy implementation. In the name of change and redress, and because of the need of politicians to produce demonstrable innovations in a short space of time, a range of policies, often contradictory in their theoretical and practical orientations and outcomes, often hastily borrowed from foreign contexts without adequate research into their success and effects, have been bundled together with insufficient consultation or research.

The implementation of so many policies has, at times, led to some confusion. Nell, (1997:26) is of the opinion that

There are still remnants of policies of ex-departments being applied to some matters while new draft policies are being formulated, discussed and tentatively applied. The inevitable result is confusion about the details of the policies that are being followed and what exactly the future policies will entail.

Nell, (1997) further asserts that presently in South Africa most education departments still make use of the traditional categorisation system.

There have been some who question inclusion as a means of redressing the problems in education (Nkabinde, 1997; McLaughlin & Warren, 1994). Meerkotter (1998) questions whether a new curriculum can improve what is happening in our schools, especially in view of the crisis in housing and health and the alarming statistics on crime. Some of the reasons for his scepticism are that the country does not have the financial and other resources to train teachers to put a new curriculum in place. Most of the former White schools, because of their long history of educational stability and supportive middle-class parent communities, find themselves in a situation where the transition to a new curriculum is reasonably easy to cope with, but for the majority of Black, poorer schools, the new curriculum is an extra burden.

One of the most common criticisms levelled at inclusive education is on the issue of finances. Educating learners with special educational needs is quite expensive in relation to ordinary mainstream education, costing on average six times more than mainstream education. Theron (1998) notes that the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) cannot, either now or in the near future, provide more funding for special education because it presently does not receive sufficient funding to provide reasonably adequate education to all mainstream learners.

The new curriculum for Outcomes Based Education has itself been through a number of changes. The implementation of inclusion is seen by some as hindersome to streamlining Outcomes Based Education. Jansen (1999:147-151) outlines a host of problems with Outcomes Based Education. A few are listed below:

OBE as curriculum policy is lodged in problematic claims and assumptions about the relationship between curriculum and society.

OBE is based on flawed assumptions about what happens inside schools, how classrooms are organised and what kinds of teachers exist within the system.

There are strong philosophical rationales for questioning the desirability of OBE in a democratic school system.

There are important political and epistemological objections to OBE as a curriculum.

OBE with its focus on instrumentalism – what a student can demonstrate given a particular set of outcomes – side-steps the important issue of values in the curriculum.

Tied to the implementation of a new curriculum, is teacher training.

The present climate within higher education does not cater for training for effective inclusive educators. Courses for teacher training at South Africa universities and training colleges still tend to focus on service delivery for separate schools dealing with children with special educational needs. (Engelbrecht, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1998:99)



Waghid and Le Grange (2000:92) argue that

...as a result of poststructuralist scrutiny, ...integrating OBE and inclusive education might annul the critical orientations of learning in inclusive schools. We argue for a new imaginary of learning that not only makes problematic OBE learning practices in emerging inclusive schools in South Africa, but also moves beyond dialogical negotiations of meaning to that of imaginative space for learners.

Educators' attitudes towards learners experiencing barriers to learning are seen as integral to the successful implementation of inclusion. Inclusion in South Africa remains an extremely complex and contentious issue. Schoeman (1994:3) writes that

...regular educators are not trained to work with pupils with special needs and it will require excessive amounts of teacher time, thereby impeding the progress of other pupils and regular educators and peers have negative attitudes towards learners with special educational needs, which will result in the isolation and stigmatization of pupils.

Davies and Green, (1998) investigated the attitudes of primary school teachers in ordinary classrooms towards learners with low to medium levels of special educational needs. Their findings indicated that teachers had positive attitudes towards the mainstreaming of children with special needs. Those teachers, who were not in favour of mainstreaming, were concerned about class size, lack of skills and the additional demands on teachers' time and energy.

Engelbrecht, Eloff, Newmark, and Kachelhoffer (1997) did a study at a school which accommodated children with Down's syndrome. They found that the educators and principal interpreted their attitudes towards these learners as positive because they loved them. However, they believed that the children with Down's Syndrome would not pass Grade 1 and tended to compare their progress to that of the other learners. Similarly, Waldron, So, Swanson & Loveland, (2001) cited in Esposito, (2004) found that teachers had positive attitudes towards the concept of inclusion, but that they held negative attitudes about the implementation of inclusion within their own school.

Hamilton's (2003) study at 2 schools revealed that,

“Some of the teachers in both of the schools reported a positive and open attitude towards inclusion. They did feel, however, that for inclusion to be successful that they needed to receive appropriate training, that the number of learners in their classes must be reduced and that their school facilities and context must be taken into consideration.”

Eloff, Engelbrecht, and Swart (2000) cited in Engelbrecht, Forlin, Eloff & Swart, (2001). undertook an investigation in Gauteng and the Western Cape to determine the factors that contributed to teachers' ability to meet the educational needs of learners with disabilities

in inclusive settings. They also looked at the stress and coping skills of teachers. The results of this research provided a clear picture of the actual stressors experienced by mainstream class teachers. Some of them are listed below.

- Limited contact with the parents of the children with disabilities
- Parents lack of understanding of the learners' capabilities
- The teachers' perceived lack of professional competence
- Administrative issues
- Issues related to the behaviour of the learners with disabilities.

These teachers were subsequently asked to indicate the most useful coping strategies that they employed to help them deal with stress.

The most useful strategy was that of making a plan of action and following it. Similarly, maintaining a sense of humour was also rated extremely highly. Other useful strategies tended to be related to contact with others including seeking help and resources from other teachers, or discussing the situation with colleagues, the learners' parents or specialist personnel. (Engelbrecht, Forlin, Eloff & Swart, 2001:83).

There is some concern that if inclusion is implemented, existing special schools would become obsolete. There is a fear that the relatively well-developed, self-contained model of special schools in the advantaged sector will disappear and that these centres of expertise and specialisation will be lost (Engelbrecht, Naicker, & Engelbrecht, 1998).

2.9 Educators' perspectives and experiences of inclusion in South Africa

Swart and Pettipher (2000:82), in their investigation into inclusive education, focused on understanding barriers teachers experience in implementing inclusive education in South

Africa, with the aim of further enhancing teacher development. They identified the following barriers:

- Participants feelings of insecurity as a result of instability, unemployment and redeployment in education
- Lack of basic services and resources
- Large classes with high teacher:learner ratio's, unsafe and inaccessible built environment
- Poverty and unemployment directly correlate with unmotivated and undernourished learners
- Different cultures, traditions and languages appear not to be acknowledged giving rise to feelings of exclusion and lack of acceptance and frequently giving rise to discrimination and insensitivity
- Negative and harmful attitudes towards diversity were identified as a critical and harmful barrier to implementing inclusive education
- Teachers did not possess the adequate knowledge and skills to address diversity
- Inadequate leadership and management were identified as being a further barrier to implementing inclusive education.



Swart and Pettipher (2000:88) concluded that

Recent reforms in South African education, many of which are based upon the politics and philosophies of the market place, have implications for teachers implementing inclusive education. Such contextual changes include implementing a new curriculum, managing increasing levels of diversity, changing patterns of family and community life, increased economic uncertainty and subsequent unemployment and redeployment, and the increase use of new technologies. It is these changes in combination that bring about much of the chaos and complexity that teachers are increasingly encountering in their work.

Muthukrishna, Farman, and Sader (2000) explored the processes involved in the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome at two ordinary schools. Results show that:

- Each of the inclusion initiatives had participants who were enthusiastic and committed to fostering and sustaining the process.
- Staff explored to what extent it was desirable and feasible for the child to participate in the various aspects of the common curriculum; therefore, schools were not constrained by traditional/Western views of what resources should be available.

Open mindedness of staff was a factor that facilitated inclusion.
Parents were active participants and informed with regards to the education of their children.

The curriculum was seen as an open system rather than a fixed agenda or a course to be run.

These results provide useful indicators on how schools can organise their responses to diversity (Muthukrishna, Farman, & Sader, 2000).

This chapter has reviewed the history of inclusive education in South Africa and elsewhere. As a developing country, discussions and debates will continue around inclusive education and its suitability for South Africa. The following chapter concentrates on the teacher's role in an inclusive setting, the characteristics of an effective inclusive educator, and the strategies educators can employ in an inclusive classroom.



CHAPTER 3

THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATOR: CHARACTERISTICS AND STRATEGIES

3.1 Introduction

Educators' identities and their approach to learners with special needs are central to the success of inclusive education (Lomofsky et al, 1999b). Educators also need certain competencies and skills. These individual qualities, characteristics, and necessary skills are well documented in the literature. This chapter presents a broad summary of the literature and includes research about the influence and effectiveness of certain attitudes and teaching strategies.



3.2 The character of an effective educator in an inclusive classroom

Since educators are the people who make learning possible, their own attitudes, beliefs, and feelings with regard to what is happening in the school and in the classroom are of crucial importance (Lomofsky et al, 1999b). Taylor, (1994:579) states that

...there is no magic in special education, no magical cure. Special education instruction for many has simply been good teaching. The good special educators have combined the art of teaching with the science coming out of research on effective teaching in general and special education. This, coupled with a strong desire, commitment and extreme empathy looks and feels good to all those involved.

Jorgensen (1997:4), in her work published in the Consortium on Inclusive Schooling Practices Issue Brief, believes that “A teacher’s success in developing effective, inclusive learning experiences for all students emanates from their beliefs and philosophy about teaching and learning ...”. The inclusion of all learners, therefore, becomes an issue related to the educators’ beliefs, values, and attitudes. The educators’ assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes are directly translated into actions and teaching practices, and inform their decision making.

This succinctly encapsulates the character of an inclusive educator. It is an educator who is not only au fait with developments within special education and teaching methodologies, but also exhibits strength of character and a positive attitude towards assisting learners with special needs.



For successful inclusion, teachers must share a number of beliefs about students and learning that form the foundation from which the curriculum is developed. These beliefs are outlined by Jorgensen (1997:4) and include a belief that

- All students can think and learn.
- All students have value and unique gifts to offer their schools.
- Diversity within a school community should be embraced and celebrated.
- All students differ in the ways they most effectively learn and express their understanding.
- All students learn best when they are actively and collaboratively building knowledge with their classmates and their teacher.
- All students learn best when studying interesting and challenging topics that they find personally meaningful.
- Effective teaching for students with disabilities is substantively the same as effective teaching for all students.

Vlachou (1993:75-79) writes that “It is necessary that teachers take note of the fact that individual differences exist in these children to the same extent that they exist in other children, and that they should interact with them in respect of their differences and particular needs”. This is in keeping with other literature which states that

To support the inclusion of learners with special educational needs teachers have to be sensitive, not only to the particular needs of individual learners, but also to their own attitudes and feelings. Clarity about their own strengths, vulnerabilities and needs is a necessary step in preparing teachers for inclusion. Inclusion requires that these learners are not simply thought of with pity, but viewed positively, in terms of their abilities rather than their disabilities. (Lomofsky et al, 1999b:71)

Like Lomofsky et al (1999b) and Jorgensen (1997), Mills (1979) cited in Lewis and Doorlag, (1995) suggests that in order to assist learners with special needs, educators must develop the necessary skills, think positively, know their own strengths and weaknesses, and smile. Mills (1979) goes on to explain that learners with special needs are children too. They need the same warmth as do all children. Similarly, Hegarty, (1994) cited in Buell, Hallam, Mc Cormick & Scheers (1999:145) writes that “The ability to successfully instruct students in any setting requires more than training, it requires that teachers feel empowered to apply new skills and competencies”. What is consistent in all the literature, such as Ward (1994); Forlin (1996) cited in Carrington, (1999) and Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) is that the attitude of the educator plays an integral role in the success of inclusion. Varied research undertaken, which will now be discussed, highlights this point.

The above literature concurs with research completed by York-Barr, Schultz, Doyle, Kronberg, and Crossett (1996:98). In their research, they explored perspectives on the characteristics of people involved in the movement toward inclusive schooling. Their research was conducted in Minnesota and produced the following results, some of which are discussed below. They found that people who were involved in an inclusive school

Had a positive regard for students with disabilities
Valued beliefs such as respect, getting along with others, and caring
Had a sense of self-efficacy and worth.

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) completed surveys of teachers' attitudes toward including students with disabilities. They reported that most teachers were in favour, to some degree, of inclusion, and most teachers were willing to accommodate students with disabilities in their classrooms. This finding is consistent with the work of Minke, Bear, Deemer, and Griffin (1996).

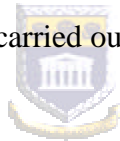


Kristensen, Omagor-Loican and Onen, (2003:197) did a study on current attitudes, perceptions and knowledge about trends towards inclusion in Uganda. Results indicate that 41% of the respondents indicated that learners with special needs should be included into ordinary school settings. Twenty-two percent suggested that it was not possible to include learners with special needs into ordinary schools. The reasons for not including children with barriers to learning into ordinary school settings were:

- Lack of training
- Lack of time to give sufficient attention to learners with special needs
- Lack of equipment and educational materials
- High pupil-teacher ratio

Opdal, Wormnaes, and Habayeb (2001) explored teachers' opinions about the inclusion of students with disabilities and special needs in regular primary schools in Palestine. Sixty percent of their sample was of the opinion that students with disabilities or special needs should have a chance to attend public schools. It is interesting to note that the following factors contributed to the participants' positive opinion towards inclusion: nature of disability, teachers' experiences with students with disabilities, number of subjects taught, gender of teacher, and characteristics of the school.

The literature and research affirm that teachers' beliefs about and acceptance of the policy and philosophy of inclusive education is indeed a significant predictor of the degree to which inclusive practices are carried out and the outcomes of such practices.



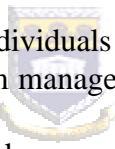
3.3 Educator competencies

A variety of instructional strategies have been described in the literature as appropriate for use in inclusive classrooms. According to Deno, Foegen, Robinson, and Espin (1996: 354), "It is these strategies that represent a means of enhancing the ability of general education teachers to meet the needs of diverse groups of students, including those with disabilities".

Inclusive education and Outcomes Based Education (OBE) is the ultimate acceptance of diversity. OBE is described by Naicker (1999) as a useful vehicle for implementing

inclusive education. As teachers are central to the success of inclusion, they are expected to accommodate and be sensitive to learner diversity in their classrooms (Green, Forrester, Mvambi, Janse van Vuuren, and Du Toit, 1999). This can be achieved by adapting the curriculum, teacher training, different approaches to teaching, being cognisant of the academic, social, and emotional development of the learner, use of support services, and classroom management strategies. These individual points will now be discussed in greater detail.

Schumm and Vaughn, (1991) outline a number of adaptations for students with disabilities in the general education classroom:

- 
- Respect all students as individuals with differences
 - Adapt effective classroom management strategies for students with special needs
 - Provide reinforcement and encouragement
 - Communicate frequently with mainstream students and special education teachers and the parents of mainstream students
 - Establish expectations for all students
 - Make adaptations for students when developing long-range plans
 - Allot time for teaching learning strategies as well as content
 - Provide individual instruction
 - Involve students in small group activities and whole-class activities
 - Provide students with ongoing feedback about performance

For successful inclusion, educators must have certain competencies and abilities with regards to curriculum development and the development of those learners with special needs. The following list of competencies represents a compilation of ideas as outlined in the National Competency Framework for Beginning Teachers (1997) and the Council for Exceptional Children Competencies (1997):

- Being sensitive to students' academic and emotional needs
- Negotiating goals and expectations with students
- Using a wide range of teaching approaches to meet students' needs
- Modifying materials and assessment to suit students' needs
- Continually monitoring teaching programmes and student learning
- Ability to formally assess the skills a student needs
- Ability to take advantage of children's individual interests and use their internal motivation for developing needed skills
- Ability to make appropriate expectations for each student, regardless of the students capabilities
- Ability to determine how to modify assignments for students.

The following descriptors concerned with the development of inclusive practices emerged out of research projects undertaken by schools using the UNESCO Teachers Education Resource Pack (UNESCO, 2000). What emerged was that a school that envisaged developing inclusive practices must amongst other things



- Plan lessons with all students in mind
- Employ a variety of teaching styles and strategies
- Encourage students to work together
- Adjust lessons in response to students reactions
- Respond positively to the difficulties experienced by students
- Identify difficulties in learning.

These competencies will now be discussed under the following headings: teacher training, strategies for adopting classroom curriculum, classroom management, teacher support and learner support.

3.3.1 Educator training

Heron and Jorgensen, (1995), and Vaidya and Zaslavsky, (2000) cited in Esposito, (2004) all maintain that inclusion requires that general education teachers not only change what they teach, but how they teach and that they must receive opportunities to develop adequate knowledge, teaching skills, and positive attitudes towards learners with disabilities.

The National Information Centre for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY), (1995:7) maintains that

It is unrealistic and unfair to expect general education teachers to creatively and productively educate and include students with disabilities in their classrooms in the absence of adequate training. General educators must be provided with the training they need in order to meet the special learning and behavioural needs of students.

The emphasis on inclusion has major implications for pre-service and in-service training of teachers. Nell (1996:8), like many other educationists, believes that “Appropriate preparation for all educational personnel is vitally important if inclusive education is to be successfully implemented”. Therefore, the professional development of educators is central to the development of an inclusive policy. With teacher training, educators are able to understand students, meet the needs of students, and plan activities that foster inclusion. It also helps teachers establish an atmosphere of acceptance. Florian (1998), cited in Rose (2001:147), suggests that “the achievement of inclusive schooling is largely dependent upon reconceptualisation of teaching roles and responsibilities, but that this

will not be easily achieved unless there is a willingness to move away from the current restrictions of the existing system”.

Dessent (1987), suggests that as a starting point to inclusion,

Teachers must receive professional in-service courses and training
Training must be linked to dealing practically with learners with special needs
Training must be linked to an overall resource/support network which bears upon the whole school.

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) observed that although most teachers were generally supportive of some form of inclusion, many teachers did believe that they were given insufficient resources to implement inclusive education. This is also made mention of in the work of Anderson (1973); Alexander and Strain (1978); Allsop (1980); Hegarty and Pocklington (1982); Naor and Milgram (1980); and Ringlaben and Price (1981) who, in their research, found that teachers’ attitudes towards their pupils with special educational needs improved positively as they became more knowledgeable about their pupils’ special needs and how to serve them.

The need for additional teacher training was a consistent theme that emerged from a study completed by Rose (2001). He found that these educators were concerned about their own lack of experience and the skills they would need to accept pupils with special educational needs into their classrooms. Ainscow (1999), cited in Rose (2001:153), suggests that “experience may well be an important part of training and it is easy to identify training needs and to tailor these to personal circumstances once the process of inclusion has begun”.

3.3.2 Strategies for adapting classroom curriculum

According to Mahaye, (2000) teaching methods could be described as specific techniques that educators employ to assist learners to gain the knowledge they need to meet their specific outcomes. Curriculum is a key issue when working with schools and teachers in sustaining inclusion. Saleh and Väyrynen (1999:5-6) believe that

If inclusion is a goal, then meaningful learning opportunities need to be provided to all students within the regular classroom setting. Matters relating to the curriculum must be flexible, particularly with regards to assessment of learning, teacher preparation and availability of learning support to pupils.

Ainscow and Hart (1992) and Ainscow (1999) write that re-looking at the classroom and curriculum provision encourages a shift from existing deficient models. There is still too much emphasis on the difficulties presented by the child with special educational needs; instead, there should be a focus on developing strategies and classroom practices which would facilitate inclusion.

An inclusive curriculum, as indicated by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) (1999), allows for:

Students who are talented and gifted to move at their natural learning pace,
Students who progress slower than their peers to move at the best of their ability
(while still being part of the exciting content of themes and lessons), and
Students with specific learning challenges to receive creative and effective support to
maximise their success.

Outcomes Based Education (OBE), the system of education in South Africa, accommodates learners experiencing barriers to learning in the following ways, as outlined in Winkler, Modise, and Dawber (1999:116).

allows educators greater freedom to plan, teach, and assess children's work in a way that helps children improve their skills
recognises the need for differentiation, which allows teachers to work on different levels in one class
uses a method of continuous assessment, which takes away exam pressures and fear of failure
encourages group work and co-operation, which means children can help each other learn
sets clear outcomes, which means children know what is expected of them
is skills based, which means teachers do not have to rush through a syllabus but can spend more time practicing the basic skills.

One of the main premises of OBE, which is in line with inclusive education, is that “All learners can perform successfully, but not at the same pace” (Spady, 1994:9).



In an inclusive classroom all learners are important, but those who experience barriers to their learning and development make special demands on teachers, who have to find ways and means of meeting their special educational needs. Teachers address these needs by providing learners with support. In other words, they make it easier for learning to happen. Learning support is not something new to teachers. In one sense, teaching is always about providing learning support. This support may have to be extended, or take a special form, in order to accommodate particular learning needs. (Green, Forrester, Mvambi, & Du Toit, 1999:129).

Kristensen, Omagor-Loican and Onen, (2003:199) in their research identified the following teaching approaches that promoted successful inclusion:

- child-centred education
- child-to-child teaching;
- group work;
- co-teaching, team teaching;

- roleplay;
- individual teaching

In an inclusive classroom the curriculum does accommodate gifted learners as highlighted above. Lewis and Doorlag, (1995:447) define giftedness as, “above average intellectual ability, which may be accompanied by superior academic achievement and creative capability.” Vaughn, Bos and Schumm (2000) outline effective practices with gifted and talented students:

- an exploratory, interdisciplinary curriculum
- emphasis on thinking strategies, problem solving, creative solutions, and decision making within the context of specific subject areas
- open-ended self-paced assignments
- interest-group assignments that enable gifted students to work together
- use of outside resources to help students develop their talents.



Stainback, Stainback, Stefanich, and Alper (1997) refer to learning support as using flexible learning objectives. Like the learning support, these learning objectives fit the unique needs, skills, interests, and abilities of students. Knight (1999:5) also picks up on this point and says that “there needs to be a match between a student’s capabilities and the task at hand; instructions need to be flexible so as to respond to individual needs”.

The curriculum, according to Wade and Zone (2000), must include and motivate students who traditionally have been excluded from success in the mainstream. They outline common strategies which allow students to become active participants in their own learning. These strategies include co-operative learning, peer tutoring, and reciprocal

teaching. They explain that co-operative learning encourages motivated, active learning, prosocial behaviour, and higher order thinking among students.

Cross and Walker-Knight, (1997) wrote that, “Co-operative learning makes sense in inclusive classrooms because it builds upon heterogeneity and formalizes and encourages peer support.” Johnson and Johnson (1994), cited in Wade and Zone (2000:11), found that “Such classrooms also promote acceptance of difference and more liking among students despite differences in ability level, sex, ethnicity, or social class”. Wade and Zone (2000:10) summarise this notion: “This way of structuring the classroom and organising the curriculum supports inclusion because it enables all students to participate in activities and to complete assignments that they could not do on their own”.



Slavin, (1991) reported that of 67 studies on the effects of co-operative learning on student achievement, 41 found significantly greater achievement in co-operative versus traditional classrooms for all types of students. This study revealed that co-operative learning structures are useful in improving relationships between students and increasing self-esteem.

Research undertaken by Stevens and Slavin (1995) indicated that after two years, a sample of pupils with learning difficulties in schools which work according to a co-operative model performed significantly better in school subjects than those in traditional schools. Moreover, they found that at-risk pupils were better accepted socially than similar pupils in traditional schools who were given remedial teaching. This research

concur with the above literature, which outlines how the curriculum can accommodate learners with special educational needs.

Cross and Walker-Knight, (1997) believe that,

“Co-operative learning is more than placing students in groups. It is a complex process involving systematic planning and modifications in the way that teachers deliver instruction and organise their classrooms. Certainly the outcomes are well worth the effort, particularly in classrooms that include a diverse student population.”

Collaboration is another technique available to educators. It reflects the notion of working together. Within the context of inclusion, “[t]he goal of collaboration would be to provide opportunities for students with disabilities to become meaningful members of their community” (Welch, 2000:72). Phillips and McCullough (1990:291-304) present five tenets of collaboration that schools should abide by:



- Common values and goals must exist within the school community.
- Collaboration must be valued.
- Joint decision making takes place.
- School must facilitate the development of collaboration.
- Everyone is accountable for services to students.

Results taken from research show that students who have opportunities to work collaboratively work faster and more efficiently, have greater retention, and feel more positive about the learning experience. It is a way for students to learn essential interpersonal life skills and to develop the ability to work collaboratively--a skill now greatly in demand in the workplace (Welch, 2000).

Paulsen, (2004:66) in her work discusses another teaching method. With this method one educator teaches and the other provides support to the learners in need of assistance.

The key to using this approach is to use it as only one alternative to other methods. Station teaching occurs when one educator teaches and the other provides support at various learning area stations. One educator teaches the lesson to a station while the other teaches at the other station, while the other stations are working independently. The process is repeated until all stations have received instruction in the lesson.

A variety of learners grouping options are available to provide an inclusive education environment. Johnson and Johnson (1980) suggest flexible and co-operative groupings as alternative options to the traditional ability groupings. The groups are constructed based on the interest, learning style and friendship of the individuals rather than on their ability.



Good and Brophy (1984) and Gurry (1984) believe that learners learn best from their peers. Peer tutoring is instrumental in teaching specific skills to peers, for re-enforcement or data collection.

3.3.3 Strategies to facilitate emotional and social development

The atmosphere educators create in the classroom affects all children irrespective of whether they are learners with special needs or not. The atmosphere in a classroom depends a lot on a teacher's attitude and teaching style. It is the educator's responsibility to accommodate not only the learning needs of all children, but also their social and emotional needs (Gous & Mfazwe, 1998).

With the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classes, the composition of classroom social networks can influence whether students with special needs make positive social gains (Farmer & Farmer, 1996 cited in Westwood, 1997). Inclusive educational settings create a situation where children with disabilities can increase their social competence (Evans, Salisbury, Palombaro, Berryman, & Hollywood, 1992; Hamre-Nietupski, Hendrickson, Nietupski, & Shokoohi-Yekta, 1994; Hendrickson, Shokoohi-Yekta, Hamre-Nietupski, & Gable, 1996). This is a commonly held assumption, that students with disabilities will be better accepted, have more friends, and feel better about themselves if placed full-time in the general education classroom (Biklen & Zollers, 1986; Gartner & Lipsky, 1989; Putnam, Spiegel, & Bruininks, 1995; Taylor, Asher, & Williams, 1987). Some studies into integration and inclusion suggest that merely placing a child with disability in the mainstream does not spontaneously improve the social status of that child (Slavin, 1991; Sale & Carey, 1995 cited in Westwood, 1997). It is for this reason that establishing good relationships with other children is regarded as one of the most important goals of education (Cooper & McEvoy, 1996 cited in Westwood, 1997).

Inclusive schools provide the best opportunities for children with disabilities to observe and imitate the social interactions and behaviours of others (Sacks, Kekelis & Gaylord-Ross, 1992, cited in Westwood, 1997). Westwood (1997) is of the opinion that inclusive classrooms must provide the necessary support for positive social interactions to occur. This is important for those students with low self-esteem and confidence. Westwood

(1997:72) goes on to map out the conditions needed to facilitate social interaction for children with special needs:

The general attitude of the teacher and the peer group needs to be made as positive and accepting as possible;
The environment should be arranged so that the child with a disability has the maximum opportunity to spend time socially involved in a group or pair activity;
The children need to be taught the specific skills that may enhance social contact with peers.

Vaughn, Bos and Schumm, (2000:205) presented a number of tips for teachers on how to create an appropriate emotional environment. It included some of the following:

- Respond to students' feelings and intentions rather than to overt behavior
- listen
- Develop a positive relationship with the student about one topic
- Establish rules and consequences to help provide the structure that students with emotional and behavioral disorders need
- Catch the students being good.
- Use humor to build relationships and to decrease tension
- Create an emotionally safe classroom environment in which students accept each other's strengths and weaknesses and treat each other with respect and consideration.

Visser, (2002) feels that it is important to build positive relations with children with emotional, social and behavioural problems. These relationships need to provide emotional safety, protection, personal involvement, trust and acceptance from others.

Garner and Davies, (2001:44) outline a number of ways in which children with behavioural, emotional and social special needs can be accommodated:

- flexible teaching arrangements
- help with development of social competence and emotional maturity

- help in adjusting to school expectations and routines
- help in acquiring the skills of positive interaction with peers and adults
- specialised behavioural and cognitive approaches
- rechannelling or refocusing to diminish repetitive and self-injurious behaviours
- provision of class and school systems which control or censure negative or difficult behaviours
- provision of a safe and supportive environment

Guralnick, Connor, Hammons, Gottman and Kinnish, (1995) believe that it is not enough simply to place children together and hope they will relate to each other positively. Strain and Hoyson, (2000) advise that a more comprehensive, multifaceted approach focusing on the environment, children's everyday interactions and their developmental skills are more likely to produce lasting results with respect to social skills. Porter, (2002:202-203) presents ways to promote acceptance between children and develop social skills:



- Ensure that the children know each other
- Consider placement
- Use toys that invite social play
- Initiate cooperative activities

A number of investigations have been designed to examine social relationships and friendships in inclusive classrooms. Marascuilo and Serlin (1988) observed the social interaction of students at schools that applied the inclusive model. The results indicated a significant increase in the amount of time that students spent in integrated school, general education classrooms, and community settings and a significant increase for students with disability in the degree to which the students initiated and engaged in interactions with others. Their overall findings suggested that inclusive educational programmes need to target educational objectives and structure educational environments to promote

communicative and social interactions between the students with disabilities and their classmates in integrated settings.

In another study on the effects of placement in general education, Fryxell and Kennedy (1995) observed that those students with disabilities who were placed in general education classrooms had higher levels of social contact with schoolmates without disabilities. Their results showed that these students received and provided higher levels of social support and that they had much larger friendship networks, composed primarily of schoolmates without disabilities.

Winkler et al. (1998) state that if teachers want to build a secure learning environment for students, they must let the students know that they care about them. Teachers do this when they respect the children, communicate politely and clearly, and listen to them so that they know that they are important. This is of particular importance to those learners with behavioural and emotional problems. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996:98) have outlined general accommodations for students with emotional disabilities. Teachers must:

- Establish an open, accepting environment
- Clearly state class rules and consequences
- Emphasize positive behaviours
- Reinforce positive behaviour
- Supply extra opportunity for success
- Be tolerant
- Use good judgement
- Teach social skills
- Teach self-control and self-monitoring and conflict resolution
- Teach positive attributions.

Richards (1999), in his research, summarised the characteristics of schools that successfully provided inclusive environments for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In this environment, educators were supportive, non-judgmental, and non-threatening; the school shared in the responsibility for the behaviour of the learner and examined its own role in his or her development; and educators in these schools adopted flexible approaches to teaching learners. These approaches were based on detailed knowledge of the individuals and an appreciation of the need to build and maintain pupils' self-esteem; consistent and detailed records were kept with the specific aim of assisting in the problem-solving process; and communication with parents was frequent, objective, and two-way. There was an emphasis on flexibility and planning and there was a commitment by senior management to inclusion. In these schools, behavioural and disciplinary policies were flexible and reflected a realistic appraisal of pupils.



3.3.4 Classroom management strategies

The importance of good classroom management cannot be overstated. “Effective classroom management consists of teacher behaviours that produce high levels of student involvement in classroom activities, minimal amounts of student behaviours that interfere with the teacher’s or other students’ work, and efficient use of instructional time” (Emmer & Everton, 1981:342). According to Lewis (1999: 269), “The issue of classroom management is integrally related to the extent to which an educational experience can be characterised as inclusive”. Inclusive classrooms look different all the time because the environment is created by whatever interactions the teacher and students have as a group or as individuals in a group.

Teachers concerned with good management will (Duke, 1979):

- Establish positive expectations and a good working relationship, create an orderly and pleasant atmosphere
- Establish clear and reasonable rules
- Create a classroom that is student-centred, where students have a high level of responsibility. They help structure the rules and are expected to follow them
- Let students know that they are accountable for their behaviour.

Similarly, Kliewer (1997) outlines the following:

- Classrooms need one rule – respect one another.
- Teachers need excellent observational skills to determine what causes bad behaviour.
- The environment should be structured so that students are actively engaged and motivated.
- Peer tutoring, co-operative learning, and reciprocal teaching facilitates good classroom management.



A number of authors cited in Porter, (2002:207) present ways to deal with aggressive children and thereby enhance classroom management:

- teach them to manage their emotions so they can behave prosocially with peers without using coercive means that invite further rejection (Arnold, Homrock, Ortiz & Stowe, 1999)
- teach the children how to enter a group without disrupting its ongoing activity (Kelly, 1996)
- guide them to make more accurate interpretations of others' intent and to overlook occasional mistakes by playmates (Asher, 1983)
- consider social skills coaching for all members of an aggressive child's clique, as all group members are likely to display similar levels of aggressions...
- foster cohesion within the peer group in general, as aggression is less common within stable cooperative groups (Farver, 1996)

Porter, (2002:221) explains that when disputes arise between children, the following steps should be followed:

- ask and listen to what each child needs
- explain each child's needs to the others involved
- ask the children how they can solve the dispute so that they all get what they need
- guide them to select one of the strategies they have suggested
- gain their agreement to try the chosen solution and thank the children for their cooperation
- once the solution is in place check that it is working

Lewis (1999:271) discusses various approaches to management. The model of influence discussed exemplifies an inclusive approach to behaviour management in classrooms. In this model, the teacher aims at making individual students responsible for their own behaviour.

It consists of the use of techniques such as listening to and clarifying the student's perspective, telling students about the impact their misbehaviour has on others, confronting their irrational justifications and negotiating a one-to-one solution to any problem behaviour that satisfies the need of both the teacher and the individual student.

The above strategies addressed methods educators can use to accommodate learners. These strategies addressed specific barriers to learning. McNamara and Moreton, (2001) highlight that many of the children with emotional and behavioural difficulties have associated learning difficulties. Here learners have multiple special needs. They write that teachers are left questioning the following. Did the learning difficulty cause the failure which then led to a poor self-image and so poor behaviour followed? McNamara and Moreton, (2001:23) suggest that,

the first approach to children with emotional and behavioural difficulties who have learning difficulties should be to address their feelings about themselves. The raising of their self-esteem through counseling approaches is a prerequisite to any changes in behaviour and should precede any attempt to gain successful feedback through progress in their learning.

3.3.5 Educator support

For all those concerned with inclusion, general education must not become a dumping ground where learners with special needs are thrown without adequate support to them or their educator. “It is important to recognise that the practicalities of adapting classrooms to accommodate the learning needs of all learners have fallen mostly on class teachers” (Hall, Campher, Smit, Oswald, & Engelbrecht, 1999:157). Givner and Haager (1995) cited in Engelbrecht, Forlin, Eloff, and Swart (2001:84) believe that teachers are in need of concrete advice on handling difficult situations to enable them to cope. They, wrote that

Traditionally mainstream educators worked in relative isolation within their own classrooms and have been primarily responsible for being the instructional leader and manager in the classroom. When learners have experienced difficulties, the teacher referred the learner to a professional for assessment and possible placement in a separate educational setting.

They go on to write that within an inclusive system, the educator is recognised as a full partner with professionals, parents, and others and now has increased responsibilities for co-ordinating the activities of learners with disabilities. Engelbrecht, Forlin, Eloff, and Swart (2001:84) write that “It is now accepted that teachers have to wear a number of hats to be successful in helping all learners gain the skills necessary for becoming independent and productive members of society”.

School support that facilitates inclusion, as outlined by Saleh and Väyrynen (1999), can take the form of:

Small class sizes

Immediate support for regular class teachers in the form of ongoing teacher training
Increased skills in curriculum differentiation and the development of more flexible pedagogies

Psychologists, therapists, social workers, etc. to provide support to a cluster of schools.

The establishment of an inclusive education system in South Africa will require the development of appropriate support services at both a school and district level. Recent policy documents like White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001) propose that such a support system should take a systemic approach utilizing district support teams that focus on management and personnel support rather than providing direct face-to-face interventions for individual learners.



Lazarus and Donald (1994), in Engelbrecht, Kriegler, and Booysen (1996:78), devised a model of practice, outlined below, for education support in South Africa:

Infusion of the health promotive and developmental practices of support services across all dimensions of the general curriculum

A cascade or consultancy model of skill distribution – from highly skilled specialists (doctors, psychologists, etc.), through medium skilled specialists (nurses, special educationists, counsellors, etc.) and post-basic skilled teachers. This will ensure adequate support, referral options and, most importantly, progressive empowerment and capacity building at different levels of the system.

Establishment of multipurpose district or community centres.

A balance which accommodates curative as well as holistic, developmental and preventative programmes of action.

The role of special schools and support services within an inclusive system in South Africa is made clear in White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training

System (Department of Education, 2001). They highlight that special schools will be strengthened rather than abolished. The aim is to make special schools part of district-based support services, where they can become resources for all schools. The district-based support service will comprise of staff from provincial district, regional, and head offices and from special schools. The role of the district-based support teams would be to offer support to all teachers and educators. Their aim is to help teachers and educators alike to develop strategies to assist learners overcome their barriers to learning.

The Department of Education (2001) recognises that education support services must be organised in terms of what learners need. They state that learners who need low intensity support will receive it in ordinary schools and those learners who need high intensity educational support will continue to receive support in special schools. Engelbrecht, Naicker, and Engelbrecht (1998:100) agree that



There is a place for special schools in an inclusive system. Special schools can play a pivotal role in an inclusive system in South Africa, providing support for special needs education within the regular school setting and outside on a full-time or itinerant basis and providing training and information for mainstream schools on specific subject areas.

Bassett & Smith, 1996; King-Sears, 1995; Villa, 1996 cited in Buell, Hallam, McCormick and Scheer, (1999:144) maintain that

Successful inclusion requires that personnel from general and special education collaborate as team members. The capacity for collaboration is enhanced when personnel from both systems receive preparation and support in order to understand the backgrounds and perspectives of each other.

This is also the opinion of Thousand and Villa (1990), in Hall et al. (1999:157), who say that “[t]he development of collaborative relationships among teachers so that expertise

may be shared is crucial to the success in meeting the diverse needs of all learners in inclusive education settings”. Hall et al. (1999:158) further explain that “Collaborative functions fall into the domain of communication and collaborative planning, and include exchanging and sharing information, joint responsibility and accountability, thus creating positive interdependence and making unique contributions”.

Similarly, Giangreco (1997), emphasises the importance of collaborative planning between teachers and support staff. He points out that the roles and responsibilities of teachers and support staff must be clear and that careful consideration must be given to the management of adults in the classroom. Teacher support is therefore a key feature for developing inclusive education practices.



In South Africa, the teacher support team becomes the core support team which provides support to learners, teachers, and parents. The teacher support team comprises mainly teachers within the school itself and, where appropriate, parents and learners. Teacher support teams focus on the development of preventative and promotive strategies in the health-promoting school framework. In a teacher support team, the focus is on difficulties of the learner. The emphasis is on diagnosis and finding a remedy for the learner (Hall et al., 1999).

Engelbrecht, Forlin, Eloff and Swart (2001:82) found that

An analysis of relevant policy and other documents in South Africa regarding support services reveals that although a systemic approach is emphasized, there is currently a conspicuous absence of specific support strategies that will address the needs of teachers in order to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive

education. The demands that teachers face in the performance of their professional roles and responsibilities and the variables that teachers report as stressful in inclusive education are not addressed.

And Farrell (2001:8) reports that

A great deal of research has now been carried out which has investigated empirical claims about the effectiveness or otherwise of inclusion. Although the findings are complex and sometimes contradictory, a key theme running through many studies is that the success of inclusion depends to a great extent on the availability and quality of the support that is offered in the mainstream school.

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) conclude from their research that the primary supports needed by general educators include time, training, personnel and material resources, and adequate class sizes. Meijer, Pijil, and Hegarty (1994) did a comparative study of six schools in different countries who all supported and implemented inclusive practices. Cross culturally they found that teacher attitude, training, support, and school finances impacted on teachers' ability to provide integrated services. Wolery, Werts, Caldwell, Snyder, & Lisowski (1995) cited in Buell et al, (1999) compared the perceptions of general educators to special educators regarding inclusive education. Both professions indicated the need for more support than they were currently receiving.

Buella, Hallam, McCormick, and Scheer (1999), in their research, conclude that in every area assessed, general educators reported significantly lower levels of support in place to promote the successful inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings. They also raised the following concerns: 79% of the general education teachers did not have an adequate class size, while 78% lacked in-service training opportunities.

All these components are a necessity for successful inclusion (Ainscow, 1999). Buella et al. (1999:153) are of the opinion that

Teachers' perceived level of support may affect their confidence in working with students with disabilities. Indeed, access to resources and support may increase teachers' perception that they have an impact on the educational outcomes of students with special needs.

All the educators interviewed during Rose's (2001) research mentioned the importance of classroom support. They felt that the transfer of pupils with special needs from special schools would more likely work if they are accompanied by support staff.

This chapter dealt with the attitudes and traits desirable in an inclusive educator and specific strategies an educator can use to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The recommendations in the literature were supported and substantiated by research. The following chapter presents this study's research design and methodology.



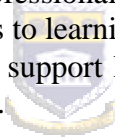
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Aim of the study

The primary aim of this research was to investigate current conditions in one typical South African classroom in a disadvantaged area, with reference to inclusion. This implied attention to:

- the physical characteristics of the classroom
- the psycho-social character of the classroom
- the educator as a person and as a professional
- the extent and range of these barriers to learning
- the practices used by the educator to support learners and
- the support available to the educator.



4.2 Qualitative research

“Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (Merriam, 2001:5). Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings. They try to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. The adoption of an approach of this nature facilitated a process whereby the opinions and views of the people being studied emerged. This is of paramount importance for the successful implementation and development of inclusive education in South Africa. Wolcott (1994:1) writes that “The real mystic of qualitative

inquiry lies in the process of using data rather than in the process of gathering data”. This data is of value because, for successful development of inclusive education policy and practice, policy makers need an analytic view of what educators are presently doing with respect to barriers to learning, how they are accommodating learners, and educators’ views thereof.

Qualitative research takes place in a particular setting as researchers are concerned with context, and they make the assumption that “action can best be understood when it is observed in the setting in which it occurs” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982:27). It is precisely for this reason that this research took place at a school in a socio-economically disadvantaged area, and an educator was observed in the classroom where she works. In other words, I wanted to ask the question asked by Wolcott (1994), “What is going on?” This research attempts to comment on what is happening in a classroom in terms of inclusion.

The following summary of the characteristics of qualitative research sketches the framework for this research (Merriam, 2001):

The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.
Research involves field work.
An inductive research strategy is employed.
The end product is richly descriptive.

4.3 Research design

4.3.1 Interpretive paradigm

This qualitative study is located within the constructivist-interpretive paradigm. This approach is appropriate because it depicts people's subjective experiences of their external world (ontology); in this case, an educator's perspective on how learners with barriers to learning are accommodated in an ordinary classroom. Its methodology encompasses the collection of data in a variety of ways. This includes interviewing, observations and field notes, and document analysis. The epistemological viewpoint of an interpretive paradigm implies that the relationship between the researcher and participant must be an empathic one (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). In this study, a genuine relationship with the educator was established. In interpretive research, "education is considered to be a process and school is a lived experience" (Merriam, 2001:4). It is this educational process and experience that will be studied. It also assumes that the final product of the research will have been jointly constructed by the researcher and the participants.



What a qualitative research design accomplishes is that it situates research in the empirical world and connects researchers to specific sites, persons, groups, institutions, and bodies of relevant empirical material (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Simply put, research designs are plans that guide research activity and ensure that sound, valid conclusions are reached (Neuman, 1997). This study draws on a case study methodology using participant observation and interviewing as its main data collection process.

4.3.2 Case study

“A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved” (Merriam, 2001:19). A case study design was chosen for this study because of its flexibility; that is, its adaptability to a range of contexts, processes, people, and foci. It has been documented that over the years that the case study has provided some of the most useful methods available in educational research (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993).

Its special features can further define a case study (Stake, 1988). These can be characterised as being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. This study meets these criteria in the following ways. This study can be described as particularistic, because of its focus on one educator and the strategies she employs to work with learners experiencing barriers to learning. This study can be characterised as being descriptive due to its detailed description of the school, educator, learners, and community. Finally, this study can be perceived as being heuristic as the results could highlight information relevant to the development of inclusive education in South Africa and the research process was of practical value to the educator involved. This research has modified the typical format of a case study report as modelled by Stake (1995) in order to fit the structure of a dissertation.

A case study is a particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education. “Educational processes, problems and programs can be examined to bring

about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps improve practice” (Merriam, 2001:41). This is the vision of this study.

4.3.3 Ethnography

Ethnography, ethnomethodology, and naturalistic ethnography are all more or less interchangeable terms that have evolved over time. They are, in essence, the study of how individuals interact and understand themselves within society. An educational ethnography deals with the culture of a school community which is similar to the study that Peshkin (1986) cited in Denzin and Lincoln, (2000) completed. Wolcott, (1988) believes that, “Ethnographic significance is derived socially, not statistically, from discerning how ordinary people in particular settings make sense of the experience of their everyday lives.” This study can be viewed as a form of classroom ethnography, where the emphasis is on one educator and the strategies she employs to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning.

With particular reference to this research, ethnography is concerned with documenting and analysing perspectives and offers an incisive way of looking ‘inside the classroom’, in an attempt to understand its structures and processes as a whole (Burgess, 1984). Similarly Wolcott, (1998:188) defines ethnography as literally meaning, “a picture of the “way of life” of some identifiable group of people.” If one takes a pragmatic look at these definitions, it appears that ethnography assumes that people go beyond what is seen or said. In relation to this research, it becomes evident that there is a move beyond just presenting what an educator does, pat off. Questions like why the educator teaches the

way she does, will come to the fore. Being conscious of what the educator says and does and her reasons behind her actions will result in not only a deeper understanding, but also insight into this situation. Common ethnographic techniques that will be used in this research are interviews, observing participants, and creating an investigator diary.

4.4 Research method

4.4.1 Context

Many factors were taken into account when it was decided where the research would take place. Of importance to this qualitative research was context. The research was primarily to reflect how learners experiencing barriers to learning were accommodated and to illustrate what was happening in one classroom, specifically in a socio-economically disadvantaged area.



Whaleside Primary was involved in training with the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. What was visible throughout the training sessions was staff's difficulty in working with learners experiencing barriers to learning. It was for this very reason that the principal of Whaleside Primary was approached and permission requested to initiate a research project, with its focus on ascertaining how educators accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning. At the time it was not necessary to seek permission from the Department of Education.

Other schools might recognise themselves in this case study since it has the following key features. Its setting, the fiscal and economic situation, there is a high teacher:child ratio, a

large percentage of the learner population resides in the surrounding area, and the school is situated in a socio-economically disadvantaged environment, which has become synonymous with theft, gang violence, and poverty. The school, community, learners, and educator will be described in greater detail in Chapter 5, as part of the data.

4.4.2 Participants

A Grade 3 educator, Mrs. Sea, volunteered to participate in this research endeavour. Her interest in remedial work motivated her to participate. The rest of the staff and the principal supported the study.

Mrs. Sea can be described as a key informant. A key informant is somebody who knows the culture the researcher is studying and likes talking about it. He/she gives freely information about his/her problems and fears, attempts to explain his/her own motivations, and demonstrates that he/she will not jeopardise the study (Neuman, 1997).

A detailed description of Mrs. Sea is provided in Chapter 5.

4.4.3 Researcher's role

“In a qualitative study the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analysing data, and as such can respond to the situation by maximising opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information” (Merriam, 2001:20). This author further outlines personality characteristics and skills an investigator should possess:

An enormous tolerance for ambiguity
Sensitivity, or the ability to be intuitive

Good communication skills

I tried to practice these skills at all times and, as a result, was able to observe and collect information which was rich in description as well as relevant to the study.

In this type of research, the researcher was also a participant and his/her background was important to the context within which he/she was operating. I am a Muslim women and was 24 years old at the time of the study. As a qualified educator, I was accepted as a member of staff. I respected the school's dress code and also took it upon myself to adopt some of the duties of the staff, such as attending the assembly, patrolling during intervals, and manning the tuck-shop. The area in which the school is situated is in stark contrast to the one in which I was raised. I come from a sheltered background where I never had to travel to school by public transportation or get up at 4:00 in the morning as some of these learners do. I also never had to do without a meal and was always protected against the harsh realities of the wider communities. Drug abuse, alcoholism, theft, gangsterism, and unemployment were issues that were not close to home as is the case with many of these learners. I have a passionate interest in this field of study and was deeply moved by what I saw and what I heard.

4.5 Methods of data collection

This research involved the collection and analysis of a variety of empirical materials through interviews, observations, field work, and document analysis. Data was collected over a period of 18 months.

4.5.1 Interviews

Mrs. Sea's knowledge, skills, and experience in working with learners experiencing barriers to learning are central to this research. It is for this reason that this research makes use of interview techniques to obtain information. Also relevant to this research are the educator's personal opinions and insight into how she works with learners. It is for this reason that unstructured interviews were conducted. As the input is personal in nature, the conversation-like character of interviewing facilitates establishing rapport and trust. Verbatim accounts, paraphrases, and summaries of some the interviews were transcribed, while others were recorded by means of a tape recorder. Gestures and facial expressions were noted.

There are many forms of interviewing. Unstructured interviews and unstructured interviews with schedules were best suited for this type of research. Unstructured interviews are often preferred by qualitative researchers. Topics within the research are used as guides in order to formulate questions (Fontana & Frey, 2000). This strategy gives the participants the opportunity to develop their answers outside a structured format. This style facilitated discussions held with Mrs. Sea and allowed for Mrs. Sea's insight, perceptions, and interpretation into what was observed.

Unstructured interviewing with schedules was ideal as there are set aspects within the research (working with learners experiencing barriers to learning) that were addressed with the educator. This type of interview is conducted by means of a research schedule (Luyt, 2000). This implies that the researcher will mainly use questions or themes that,

from the existing literature, appear to be important as guidelines for the interview. In this case, issues relating to education, issues concerning learners experiencing barriers to learning, strategies to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning, and the curriculum were tabled for discussion. The schedule has a further advantage in that it stimulates discussion and allows the researcher complete freedom and flexibility to explore an infinite range of issues (Pretorius, 1991). Dates of interviews and topics as well as two interview transcripts are included as Appendix 1, 2 and 3.

4.5.2 Participant observation and field notes

Participant observation has its roots in ethnography, and like fieldwork, involves social interaction, looking, listening, recording, and enquiring (Pretorius, 1991). “Observation is regarded by many as the oldest method in psychology and it is something we engage in during the course of our everyday lives” (Banister, 1996, cited in Luyt, 2000:12). Many authors are of the opinion that action can best be understood when it is observed in the setting in which it occurs (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). In this research, participant observation allowed for a close view of how the educator interacted with the learners and how the learners themselves interacted with each other. Seeing the teaching environment and community helped to contextualise the study and further supported what was discussed during interviews.

All data collected in the course of observations were recorded as field notes. Participant observers employ field notes for recording observational data. Field notes should ideally consist of relatively concrete, complete, accurate, and detailed descriptions of social

processes and their context (Pretorius, 1991). In other words, field notes are descriptions of people, events, and conversations in the setting of the study. They provide any study with a personal log that helps the researcher to keep track of the development of the study. Field notes assembled in this research included, *inter alia*, interview transcripts, personal documents, and diary entries.

Field notes also include the observer's actions, feelings, and hunches. This can be described as the reflective part of field notes. This personal account of the researcher's experience can be equated to a personal diary. The diary entries from this study reflected my feelings, ideas, prejudices, hunches, impressions, and problems (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). In the data analysis of this study, the diary entries have been an invaluable tool for cross referencing and validating other recordings. All diary entries are typed in italics.



4.5.3 Document study

Bogdan & Biklen (1982:100) observe that “A qualitative researcher's interest in understanding how the school is defined by various people propels them toward official literature”. I arranged with the necessary gatekeepers for access to the school's mission statement, learners' workbooks, and student records. Document analysis refers to these types of papers. This official documentation provided some insight into the running of the school and the development of the learners. The learners' workbooks and student records supported Mrs. Sea's description of some of the learners' academic progress and helped to highlight their barriers to learning.

It is not uncommon for researchers to ask subjects to write something themselves. “Personal documents are used broadly to refer to a first-person narrative produced by an individual who describes his or her own actions, experiences and beliefs. The criterion for calling written material personal documents is that it is self-revealing of a person’s view of experience” (Allport, 1942, cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1982:37). For this research, Mrs. Sea wrote a composition about herself, why she became an educator, her strengths and weaknesses, and her thoughts on the curriculum.

4.5.4 Photography

Photographs of the classroom and school environment provide factual information to better understand the school location, the environment in which the learners are educated, and classroom management. These photographs are included in Appendix 7. Photographs of the educator and learners were not included to ensure confidentiality.

4.6 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among the categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that are accumulated to increase understanding of them and to enable the writers to present what has been discovered to others (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

Particular description, general description and interpretive commentary are units in the process of data analysis that this study will apply. Particular description

consists of quotes from people interviewed, quotes from field notes, and narrative vignettes of everyday life. General description is needed to tell the reader whether the vignettes and quotes are typical of the data as a whole. Interpretive commentary points the reader to those details that are salient to the author. Commentary that follows the particular vignette or quote stimulates the retrospective interpretation of the reader. (Erikson, 1986:150-152)

The vignettes included in Chapter 5 describe the learners, and the discussion that follows in Chapter 6 highlights the strategies Mrs. Sea uses to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning. The following data analysis techniques were employed in an effort to organise the data.

4.6.1 Themes

Theme analysis describes the specific and distinctive recurring qualities, characteristics, subjects of discourse, or concerns expressed. The researcher selectively analyses aspects of human actions and events that illustrate recurring themes. The complexity and the interrelationships of the events and human lives are emphasized. (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:508)

Within this process, it was discovered that many of the themes had sub-issues. This involved linking coded categories. What inducing themes and coding achieves is that it brings data relating to the same topic together.

4.6.2 Coding

Coding is the process of dividing data into parts by a classification system (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). The researcher searches for regularities and patterns in the data as well as for topics the data cover, and then writes down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. These words and phrases are coding categories. They are a means of sorting the descriptive data that have been collected so that the material bearing

on a given topic can be physically separated from other data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). This systematic process of constant comparison was followed as a guideline. Taking into account the nature of the study, predetermined categories like strategies, support, and barriers to learning were also used.

4.6.3 Association

Associating involves interpreting material in relation to a broader theoretical, historical, cultural or political framework. As interpretive researchers, it is necessary to refer to the contexts in which images and texts were created, and the history in which they were employed, to understand the fullness of their meaning. (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999:410)

This technique was deemed useful because, after refining the data into headings, subheadings and category issues the political and cultural context of Whaleside Primary emerged. The context in which the school, educator, and learners find themselves does impact on their education. Thus the context was regarded as part of the data and will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

4.7 Validity and Reliability

According to Neuman (1997:369), validity in field research is defined as “the confidence placed in a researcher’s analysis and data as accurately representing the social world in the field”. Similarly, Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:61) define validity “in terms of the degree to which the researcher can produce observations that are believable for herself or himself, the subjects being studied and the eventual readers of the study”. What is common in both is that observations made, and information obtained from participants, must reflect the realities of their world and be credible to others.

4.7.1 Internal validity

In the case of this study, I visited Mrs. Sea and the school on approximately 24 occasions over a period of 18 months. Data collection was done methodically. This allowed for comparison, corroboration, and refinement of ideas and information. Data collected from informants were phrased in their mother tongue, Afrikaans, to ensure that their input was not lost in translation. All interviews and observations were conducted in the school setting; this and the above strategies increased the internal validity of the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993).

According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993:30), a researcher meets the requirements of internal validity when the following four factors are met:



The ethnographer's common practice of living among participants and collecting data for long periods provides opportunities for continual data analysis and comparison to refine constructs; it ensures a match between research categories and participant realities.

Participant observation is conducted in natural settings reflecting the life experiences of participants more accurately.

Ethnographic analysis incorporates researcher reflection, introspection, and self monitoring.

The above was achieved by spending just over 18 months at Whaleside Primary, collecting data by means of observations of the educator in her classroom setting, interviewing the educator, and informal conversations with staff. Personal diary entries facilitated opportunities for reflection and introspection.

4.7.2 External validity

“External validity is the extent to which it is possible to generalise from the data and context of the research study to broader populations and settings” (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:63). In layman’s terms, external validity answers the question: how do we know that the results of this one piece of research are applicable to other situations? The educator involved in this research process is representative of many educators for the following reasons. She works with an educator:learner ratio of 1:45, as do many educators in the Western Cape. Mrs. Sea has identified learners experiencing barriers to learning in her classroom; the literature on South African education presents us with evidence of the presence of learners experiencing barriers to learning in schools. Other schools might recognise themselves in this case study since it has the following key features. A large percentage of the student population resides in the surrounding area. The school is situated in a socio-economically disadvantaged environment, which has become synonymous with theft and gang violence and poverty, a problem many schools are faced with daily. Nevertheless, Mrs. Sea is also a unique individual and, for this reason, no claim is made that the results are generalisable, except by analogy.

In qualitative research, transferential validity is sometimes also known as external validity. Transferential validity a term coined by Smaling (1992:431) cited in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, (1999) and refers to “the ability of the account to provide answers in other contexts and to the transferability of findings to other contexts”. To comply with the standards of transferential validity, accurate descriptions of the research process are

included, strong arguments are made supporting the research methods used, and a detailed account of the context and research situation has been provided in this research.

Ecological validity was promoted by observing the class for a length of time. Data was collected relating to strategies the educator used to support learners with special needs. At a later stage, during an interview session, the interviewee was requested to share the techniques she had acquired to support learners experiencing barriers to learning. Upon examination of observations and transcripts, a direct correlation between the observations and information shared during interviews was found, thereby indicating that the researcher's presence in no way hindered, modified, or altered the educator's methodology. This is in line with ecological validity, which is "the degree to which the social world described by a researcher matches the world of members. A project has ecological validity if events would have occurred without a researcher's presence" (Neuman, 1997:369).

In order to validate the research findings, triangulation was applied. Cohen and Manion (1994:233) refer to triangulation as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour". Flick, (1998:229-231) believes that

Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation but an alternative to validation...The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any enquiry

Wolcott, (1988:192) believes that,

The anthropologist's trade secret, freely disclosed, is that he or she would never for a minute rely solely on a single observation, a single instrument, a single approach. The

strength in fieldwork relies in its “triangulation”, obtaining information in many ways rather than relying solely on one approach.

To ensure validity of this nature, a number of qualitative data collection methods were included in the study, namely interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. This is better known as methodological triangulation. This allows the researcher to “home in” as Terre Blanche and Kelly, cited in Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:128), say, “on the participant’s understanding and point of views”. Triangulation is of value to this research as it clarifies and to an extent verifies the accuracy of observations and interview transcripts.

4.8 Reliability



Formal data analysis was carefully and timeously done to promote reliability and validity.

For qualitative researchers, reliability is, “the extent to which independent researchers could discover the same phenomena and to which there is an agreement on the description of the phenomena between the researcher and the participants. Reliability refers to the consistency of the researcher’s interactive style, data recording, data analysis and interpretation of participants’ meanings from the data. (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:385)

However, qualitative research of this nature is, by its nature, unique, and it is not to be expected that a similar study by another researcher would produce exactly the same results.

Reliability is reflected in the design of the research and in the manner in which data were collected. Presenting information relating to the following aspects: the researcher's role, social context, data collection, and data analysis strategies promoted reliability in this design. The reliability of a researcher's role is enhanced when the researcher is unknown to the setting and participants, as I was unknown to Whaleside Primary and its staff.


Neuman (1997) provides a fieldworker with clear and concise guidelines as how to go about their field research. I have adopted them. As indicated earlier, I observed Mrs. Sea's classroom and I was expected to adopt certain responsibilities at the school. Neuman (1997) believes that interacting on such a personal level (with the school and Mrs. Sea) helps the researcher acquire an insider's point of view. However, by jotting down my observations, I maintained the distance of an outsider. Neuman (1997) advises field researchers to take into account both recognizable and implicit aspects of behaviour and points out that language, tone, and body language contain a wealth of information.

A careful description of the informant, Mrs. Sea, and the decision process used in her selection prohibits informant selection from being a threat to reliability (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). By providing the above information, this criterion is successfully met and reliability is enhanced.

Verbatim accounts, low inference descriptors, and mechanically encoded data (use of tape recorder) are strategies used to reduce any threat to reliability. Verbatim accounts are quotations from interviews, which were included to serve as evidence to illustrate the

participants' understanding. Low inference descriptors, as defined in McMillan and Schumacher (1993:389), means that "the descriptions are almost literal and any important terms are those used and understood by participants. Low-inference descriptions are in contrast to the abstract language of a researcher".

Therefore, the language and descriptions used in both participant observations and interviews reflect, *inter alia*, jargon used in education, slang, and code-switching.

Mechanically recorded data included the use of a tape recorder. Interviews with Mrs. Sea were recorded to ensure they captured her meaning and her understanding of what was discussed. A tape recorder therefore increased the reliability of discussions that took place. What reliability achieves for the reader is certitude that the findings did indeed occur as presented through the detailed  interview transcripts and observed accounts.

4.9 Ethics

At all times, I followed the guidelines of the American Psychology Association (APA) for ethical research. In the literature on ethics, academics are in agreement that ethics "are considered to deal with beliefs and what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:182). Similarly, Stake, (2000:244) observes that "Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict". Ethics also help sensitize researchers to dilemmas and moral issues they could possibly face. According to Heslop (2003:37), the

ethical issues of research are linked to concerns about appropriate ways of conducting an inquiry. He argues that “many ethical issues involve a balance between two values: the pursuit of scientific knowledge and the rights of those being studied”. According to Heslop (2003:38), the ethical considerations of research is to obtain consent for participation in the study, to ensure anonymity and to address issues of confidentiality”. These considerations were applied and met in this study.

With the inception of the research, a conference with the principal of Whaleside secured permission to conduct research at the school. A detailed account of the research was presented to the staff and their role in the research was shared with them, so that they understood what was expected from them and their role in the research. I placed great emphasis on the fact that the participation was strictly voluntary. Mrs. Sea’s interest in remedial work motivated her to participate in this research endeavour.

Confidentiality and anonymity were assured by confirming that all data collected through interviews and observations would be securely stored, to safeguard identities. I took a personal decision that anything observed that was contrary to school policy would be kept in confidence. Pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity. For the same reason, some details of the learners were changed.

Input around the research process was presented on more than one occasion, to ensure that any discrepancies could be ironed out. The research process was presented to the staff as a whole, and followed up by smaller sessions for Mrs. Sea, who showed an

interest, to facilitate her questions. It was emphasised that involvement in this research presented no visible risks for the school, educators, or learners.

After perusing the literature on ethics, I have taken it upon myself to fulfil the following duties. As indicated earlier, I took a candid, honest approach when I presented the staff with the outline for this research. I felt it was important to present this information not only to staff and principal, but also to the secretary, school caretakers, and the governing body to ensure that all interested parties were aware of the research. Throughout the research, I was mindful of the words of Punch (1986:373), cited in Fontana and Frey (1994): “as field workers we need to exercise common sense and moral responsibility, and we would like to add to our subjects first, to the study next and to ourselves last”. Mrs. Sea was aware that she could choose to withdraw from the research at any time, and I provided support at many times when she appeared distressed during our conversations.

This chapter has described in detail the research process and attempted to justify the choices made. Chapter 5 presents the first part of the data, in the form of a story, as befits a case study report. It is also detailed in its description of the community, school, classroom, and educator. The chapter also gives insight into the type of person Mrs. Sea is, her role as an educator, and her thoughts about learners experiencing barriers to learning.

CHAPTER 5

A PORTRAIT OF MRS. SEA'S CLASSROOM

5.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by contextualising the community, school, classroom, and educator in considerable detail. This is followed by a detailed description of a day in the life of Mrs. Sea.

5.2 The Community context



Whaleside Primary is situated in Ashford, an area in Cape Town characterised by poverty and unemployment. Alcoholism, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS (Human Immune Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) are also common in this area. Most of the learners come from the immediate areas of Ashford, Seven Oaks, and Maidstone. There are three high schools and eight primary schools in this area. A large percentage of learners live in a nearby block of flats, known as 'kill me quick'. The school has 700 learners with an educator:learner ratio of 1:45 in the foundation phase and 1:55 in the intermediate phase. The school fees are R80,00 per term; they are, unfortunately, not paid timeously and often not at all. The school therefore depends on its subsidy from the Department of Education.

Whaleside Primary is a community school with a strong affinity to the church. Many of the educators, learners, and parents attend the same church; this is where they interact on a more social level. Mrs. Sea says that church on Sunday is also an opportunity for parents to find out what is currently happening at school and to gossip about the educators and learners, and for educators to meet and consult with parents who sometimes ignore requests for meetings.

This area and its neighbouring communities are plagued by high incidences of theft, gang violence, burglaries, and drug abuse. Of concern in the community is the high incidence of poverty and alcoholism. Statistics from Ashford Police Station indicate that theft makes up 44% of crime in Ashford. Many families are church going and church houses are a new and growing phenomenon in the community. In an effort to cope with the above problems, Ashford recently opened its own day hospital, community centre, and community hall. The following journal entry, written in May, 2000, gives insight into the type of community in which the students live.

..... I did not feel comfortable travelling to Ashford; I don't know anyone and many of the people looked like skollies (gangsters). The taxi dropped me in the main road some 15 minutes from the school. The taxis don't drive into Whaleside so I had to walk. There really are only 2 entrances into Ashford, because the main road closes off many of the side roads. This does make travelling to and out of the area awkward. I had to walk through Seven Oaks to get to Ashford, and as I walked, I passed pretty houses with beautiful gardens. 'The people of this area must be well off', I thought to myself.

To me, the end of the street separates Seven Oaks from Ashford, because the two areas just look so different, one rich, the other poor. I was scared. I had to cross this unkept field with guys loitering around. Relief washed over me as I passed quickly, but I was jolted back to reality by swearing, screaming and shouting. The noise came from a huge block of flats known as 'kill me quick'. There were toddlers playing in puddles of water, men smoking what smelt like ganja (dagga), youngsters playing soccer, and ladies hanging washing. Many of the houses adjacent to the flats look like little council houses.

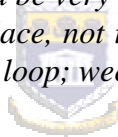
There are 2 house shops and even a hairdresser. I recited every prayer that I knew, but when I arrived safely at the school I felt so guilty for judging these people.

The following extract, written a month later, highlights that my fears discussed above were justified, but it also provides insight into the community.

... Word has quickly spread that I am juffrou Sakeena. Most afternoons, I purposefully walk the same route that the children do; in this way, I am associated with the school and not regarded as a stranger. These days, as I walk people, greet me, 'Hello juffrou.' These are the moms, sisters, and aunts of the students. I feel much more at ease, but I am still on my guard.

I relayed both these experiences to some of the teachers; they laughed and told me that generally the community is very friendly and have the highest respect for the teachers. "Die mense weet al die halle gevalle (happenings) van die skool. As hulle vir jou ken, sal niks gebeur nie".

They did warn me, though, that I should be very careful, as the area is unsafe, and that it is the gangsters who watch over the place, not the police. "Die jonges hier sal jou bag vat en dan m?re sal hulle net verby jou loop; wees baie versigtig, juffrou Sakeena".



5.3 The school context

Whaleside Primary was established in 1970. Initially the area only had one primary school, but staff at the existing primary school broke away to form Whaleside Primary. During the late 1980's, a social worker started doing community work from Whaleside Primary. This evolved into a group over the years and is presently known as The Volunteers of Whaleside (VOW). This group consists of students from a local university, volunteers from the community, and ex-learners of Whaleside Primary. In 1991, the school celebrated its 21st birthday and had its first carnival. A computer room was built in 1997. Kader Asmal, the then Minister of Education, visited the school in 2000 when the

school had a competition to raise funds. A car was the main prize. The school is part of the Association of Schools in Ashford, Mainstone, and Sevenoaks (ASAMS), an association made up of all the primary schools in the area. This association does community work for the wider area, such as raising funds for the elderly and poor.

The first thing that one is struck by when arriving at the school is the fact that the gates are locked. The need to feel secure is heightened by the fact that groups of people lounge about on the street corners, some openly smoking dagga while standing around a fire.

The atmosphere inside Whaleside Primary contrasts boldly to its surroundings. The school looks very organised, learners are in their classrooms, and lessons are being taught, while learners peep excitedly at the strangers walking into their school. The normality of the chitter chatter of learners, the movement of chairs, and the bustle of educators making their way to class allays any reservations or apprehensions held upon arrival. Every now and then, there is this loud, piercing sound; it is the aeroplanes that are landing at the nearby airport.

The school grounds look naked; there are only three big trees in the entire school, very few flowers, and most of the quad is covered with gravel. The school is, however, very clean, well kept, and organised and reflects the care and commitment of the staff. The school employs 30 educators, a caretaker, and a tea lady. An extra tea lady and a caretaker work at the school; they are paid with the donations the school receives and are employed knowing that some months they will not get paid or will receive very little.

In addition to 30 classrooms, the school also has a tuck-shop, a computer lab, a library, a resource room, a sick bay, a kitchen, and a caretaker's room. Lack of funds and staff has forced the school to close down the library and the computer lab. The school receives a subsidy to run a feeding scheme for the grade 1, 2, and 3 learners. These learners get soya milk and bread, Mondays to Thursdays. During winter, the learners get a cup of soup and bread; the soup is donated by a group of women who live in Ashford. The tea lady prepares the peanut butter or jam sandwiches in the school kitchen. Each class receives about 30 sandwiches and a container half filled with soya milk before interval. For many of the learners, this is their first meal of the day. Unfortunately, sometimes they only get a half a slice of bread at school. In July 2000, I wrote:

..... *I was embarrassed during the first few weeks as I was unable to stand the smell of the soya milk, which the students call milkshakes.*



The staff room is pretty and comfortable. Tables are covered with tablecloths and each table has a vase with artificial flowers. A chart highlighting educators' birthdays, motivational sayings, and the school mission statement are all pasted on the walls. One educator told me that they wanted to spruce up the place as they felt that this comfortable environment kept their spirits up.

The grade 3 learners are dismissed at one o' clock. Senior grades are dismissed at three o' clock. Educators are expected to stay at school from three until four o'clock as stipulated by the Department of Education. It is during this time that educators attend staff development seminars and OBE training and co-ordinate the school's sport matches. The

school recently started an aftercare service for those learners who must wait from 12:30 until 3:00 for their lifts or for their siblings. This, unfortunately, has been unsuccessful, because many of the parents cannot afford the aftercare, and the learners are left to roam the school grounds.

A local university hires three classrooms. They use the school as a base from which to do their student training in the Ashford, Seven Oaks, and Maidstone areas. A community pre-school uses the rest of the classrooms in this block. The school manages the pre-school's finances, while community members run the pre-school. The school is very involved in community work. The school's drama and gospel group regularly visits the sick and the aged, while the school sports field is used as a venue for matches every Saturday. The school also offers various extra-curricular activities, such as soccer, mini netball, gymnastics, netball, folkdance, rugby, and mini cricket.

Often by ten in the morning, the sun is blazing, classrooms are musty, the learners reek of sweat, and the school grounds cry out for water. The school boasts a beautiful rose garden in front of the office, but this has dried out. The principal sounds sad as he explains, "Ja dit is hartseer dat die blomme so moet vergaan, maar ons probeer om die water rekening so laag as moontlik te behou". Like the rose garden, the school field, bigger than a rugby field, stands dry and naked. Lack of funds prevents the school from developing this field.

The junior grades are situated on the far right-hand side of the school as the juniors' daily routine differs from that of the seniors. All the junior classrooms have mesh bars behind their windows; the other classrooms do not. As a result, 'break-ins' have become the norm. Financial constraints do not permit the entire school to be equipped with an alarm system.

The most common item stolen at the school, educators say, is the fluorescent bulbs in the classrooms. "Die snaakse ding is dat na 'n paar dae kom die skelms weer skooltoe; maar *die* keer verkoop hulle die verdeksels se goed aan ons. Wat kan ons maak? Dit is veels te duur by die winkel en daarom koop ons dit weer van hulle", the secretary related.

Vandalism and burglaries are a huge problem at this school. One Monday morning, I was witness to a visit from police as the tuck-shop had been burgled. Luckily, the tuck-shop, office, computer lab, and junior classrooms are attached to the alarm system. The would-be thieves escaped when the alarm was triggered. The principal related that he and the educators have resorted to scare tactics, as it is families or friends of the learners, or the learners themselves, who are the culprits. I, myself, was taken in by the principal's ploy. The principal, during his morning address, sternly informed the learners that the police had the fingerprints of the burglars and that the police would be taking the fingerprints of all the learners. He then encouraged those learners who knew anything to come forward. By the end of the day, the culprits were identified.

On another occasion, the principal's cell phone was stolen out of his office. A few days later, a joke quickly circulated around the staff room: 'now the principal can no longer have an open door policy!' Another educator explains, "As ons nie so guy maak nie sal ons almal mal raak". A good sense of humour, it seems, helps the educators cope.

Parent-educator altercations are not uncommon at Whaleside Primary. On one occasion, an educator threw a packet of chips at one of the learners who had not been paying attention in class. The educator then evicted him from her class. The learner left, walked out of the school, went home, and told his mother what had happened. The mother shouted obscenities all the way to the school. She stormed into the school carrying a stick and shouting, "Ek gaan jou opdonder juffrou". The principal had to intervene quickly to prevent any unpleasantness. On another occasion, an old man who lives nearby walked into the school very drunk. He could hardly walk straight and stumbled along as he shouted that he wanted to visit the principal who was his friend. He walked into the staffroom where a few educators and I were sitting and then sat down at our table. Before he could say anything, two male educators escorted him out of the school with a bit of pushing and shoving. After these incidents, the school decided that, in the interest of the learners' and educators' safety, it would be best to lock the school gates.

5.4 A visit to the classroom

The classroom is 60m in length and 56m in width. It has four large windows and three smaller ones that are rusted shut. The large windows as shown in Appendix 7, do not

open entirely because of the mesh wire outside the classroom. The room is badly in need of a new coat of paint; water stains watch over the learners as the ceilings sag in from the weight of winter rains. All these nuisances: the dirty windows, broken door, and old desks, are cleverly camouflaged by lots and lots of posters, drawings, paintings, and charts as shown in photographs in Appendix 7.

The layout of the classroom facilitates group work, class discussions, and peer tasks. There is a mat in front of the class on which learners sit during class discussions or during group work. The mat has seen better days; it is worn thin from use and smaller mats have been strategically placed to cover the holes. There are 22 tables and 43 chairs. Many of the tables and chairs are rusty, and 11 are badly damaged. The tables are clustered in groups which seat 6 to 8 learners. Each table has 10 pencils and crayons that are shared amongst the group. The grade 1, 2, and 3 classrooms have a basin and tap. The se taps are occasionally turned off at the mains to save water.

The learners' portfolios are stored in a shelf at the back of the classroom. There is an inset in the back wall for a steel cabinet where all the toys, tasks, worksheets, the abacus, puzzles, and books are stored.

The musty smell in the class is intensified by the fact that the classroom does not get much sunlight. This has both its advantage and disadvantage. In summer, the class is relatively cool but lacks sufficient light, whilst in winter, the class is unbearably cold.

5.5 Meeting Mrs. Sea

5.5.1 Mrs. Sea's story

Mrs. Sea hails from the Boland. Her brother, sister, and two aunts with whom she grew up all went into the teaching profession. When she was in standard nine (grade 11), her father had the first of a series of heart attacks. Although she was a good learner, her father decided that because she was the eldest, she had to leave school. Her father wanted her to be able to support the family if he fell ill or died.

Due to apartheid policies, Mrs. Sea had little choice but to become a nurse or an educator. She applied for a job as an air hostess, but was turned away because she was the wrong colour. She enrolled at a teachers' college, where she excelled, and by her third year, was teaching as a substitute educator. While studying, she spent her weekends taking religious courses at a convent to, as she says, "Put more discipline in my religion".

Her father's two spinster sisters, with whom she grew up, were her role models. Mrs. Sea helped them with their lessons, listened to their stories about school, and often helped them mark schoolwork. Mrs. Sea was particularly fond of her aunt who was a remedial teacher and believes that she inherited her aunt's mannerisms and love for children.

Mrs. Sea has spent the past 12 years teaching at Whaleside Primary School. She started studying towards her Bachelor of Arts degree through Unisa, but had to give it up due to her husband's ill health. She has completed enrichment courses for junior primary

teachers, a mathematics course at Stellenbosch University, a school management course, and her Outcomes Based Education (OBE) training. She is presently completing two remedial courses.

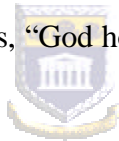
Mrs. Sea is the head of department (HOD) of the foundation phase. She trains all the foundation phase educators in OBE, evaluates their lessons, and moderates the learners' portfolios. Mrs. Sea says that "The administrative werk maak my klaar, but I enjoy this new approach to teaching, I have really learnt a lot thus far. Dit is baie difficult as jy 'n vrou is; die mans dink hulle is nog altyd in charge; dit is hoekom ek altyd my bes probeer om hulle almal in my besluite te include; ek wil graag hulle respek gain. Nie almal verstaan nie; som van hulle dink net dat as jy HOD is, dan kry jy meer geld; ek het vir 10 jaar vir die pos apply en dit het maar net verlede jaar deurgekom". Mrs. Sea is presently training all the grade 3 educators in Outcomes Based Education. As the head of department (HOD) she is expected to attend meetings with the school subject advisor and other HOD's in the immediate area. Mrs. Sea is also responsible for the daily management of the school if the principal or deputy principal is not available. Mrs. Sea also takes inventory of all the equipment for the foundation phase and draws up and processes order forms when equipment is required.

Eight years ago, Mrs. Sea's husband, also an educator, was diagnosed with prostate cancer. His cancer went into remission, but he decided earlier this year to retire from teaching after falling ill again and finding out that he had an enlarged heart. Mrs. Sea admits, "This stressful circumstance takes a lot out of the children and me". She explains

that, at first, she and the children blocked out any thought of death; now they feel more prepared and have since joined a support group at church to strengthen their faith in handling this personal crisis.

Mrs. Sea says that sometimes during the evenings she has to rush her husband to hospital. However, the next day she comes to school and works twice as hard because she does not want the children to know that she is going through a rough time. “Somtyds gaan dit regtig opdraans en dan speel ek met die kinders. Ons sing en ons maak grappe, en so vergeet ek ‘n bietjie van my probleme”.


Mrs. Sea’s faith is an integral part of who she is and is reflected in her teaching and how she interacts with the learners. She states, “God hou my aan die gang. Hy gee my die krag om hierdie werk te doen”.



5.5.2 Mrs. Sea’s general attitude towards barriers to learning

The idea of addressing barriers to learning is not new to Mrs. Sea. In her 20 years of teaching, she says, “Daar was altyd ‘n kind wat ‘n ekstra bietjie help met hulle werk nodig gehad het”. She points out that since working at Whaleside Primary, there has been a distinct increase in the number of learners with physical, intellectual, social, and emotional problems. “Kinders sukkel ja, met hulle skoolwerk, maar daar’s probleme by die huis. Nou, as hulle skool toe kom, kan hulle nie cope nie, want hulle sit met hierdie probleme”. Mrs. Sea admits that working with learners experiencing barriers to learning is difficult, “Sometimes I’m at my wits end. I feel helpless, maar wat kan ek doen?” In a

sincere effort to help those learners experiencing barriers to learning, Mrs. Sea recognises that, as an educator, she has limitations and that some of her strategies have not generated results. Mrs. Sea is of the opinion that the fact that she has no formal training in dealing with learners experiencing barriers to learning makes assisting them an arduous task. She is currently in the process of completing a remedial course which she feels will better equip her in helping her learners. Thus far, she states that it has been her teaching experience, her gut instinct, and her faith that have carried her through and helped her assist learners experiencing barriers to learning. She adds that the learners' problems have reached a point where she is at a loss about what to do.

It is with this mindset that Mrs. Sea welcomes the philosophy of inclusive education. According to Mrs. Sea's understanding,  inclusive education is a new way of teaching and the school, parents, support services, and community all work together to help all learners. "At Whaleside, unfortunately, ons sukkel om die ouers involved te kry; baie van ons onderwysers het training nodig in OBE en die support services het hulle eie probleme". She adds that if all the above elements are in place, she envisages a momentous positive change in South Africa's education system.

Mrs. Sea found it both easy and difficult to apply OBE. She says, "Ek moes baie lees om 'n geheelbeeld te kry van wat ek moes doen. Riglyne was vaag en ander opvoeders was traag om aan te pas. As departementhoof moes ek altyd op hoogte van sake bly. Dis nie elke dag maklik nie, want ek moes na alles self omsien, maar terselfdetyd is dit

uitdagend. Ek weet nou ek moet vir elke liewe kind help and every child learns at his or her own pace”.

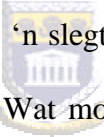
5.5.3 Mrs. Sea’s concerns and reservations

Issues of curriculum development, Mrs. Sea’s personal growth as an educator, and the impact school has on her family are discussed below.

“Baie keer sukkel ek met OBE maar ek moet confident wees, want ek moet die ander onderwysers train. Ek raak kwaad as die department keer op keer die goed verander en nie vir ons ordentlike riglyne gee nie. Wie help vir my? Niemand nie. Nou doen ek net my eie ding – maar so ver is ons oraait; die inspekteur is gelukkig met ons werk. Daar is baie administratiewe werk; die onderwyser en leerlinge het ‘n portfolio. Die range statements, performance indicators, en al die outcomes maak somtyds vir ons deermekaar. OBE sê dat ons minder toetse moet gee. Ja, ek glo ook hierin, maar nou moet ek huiswerk gee en baie van die kinders doen dit nie of mammie en pappie het nie tyd nie; hulle kom mos laat huistoe. Of, luister hierna, mammie en pappie doen dit self. Ek kan onmiddellik sien dat die handskrifte verskillend is. Ek dink nie dat die department oor hierdie realities gedink het nie; hulle dink net van die ryk mense”.

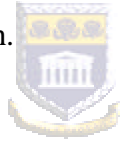
“Ek is baie, baie, baie lief vir hulle, maar daar is goed wat hulle doen wat ek nie kan verdra nie. Die meisies hou daarvan om aan my klêre te raak, ‘O! juffrou het ‘n mooi broek aan; dit is ‘n kwaai hemp.’ Hulle hande is vuil. I know they mean well, but you know what they say: cleanliness is next to godliness. As ek by my tafel sit, dan wil hulle

my hare kam en aan my gesig raak om makeup aan te sit met daardie vuil naels en vuil hande! [Mrs. Sea shakes her head] Ek is ‘n slegte persoon om so te dink”.

“Baie van hierdie kinders se ouers het nie hoërskool voltooi nie. Baie van hulle dink dat ons hulle kinders moet groot maak en self die kinders se probleme moet oplos. As ‘n leerling ‘n bietjie sukkel en ek stuur ekstra werk huistoe met ‘n notatjie, sal die ouers niks daaraan doen nie. Hulle dink die juffrou moet sukkel want sy word betaal. Wat my wel kwaad maak is as ek wel kan help, maar die ouers werk nie saam met my nie. Soos jy weet, het ek gereël dat Jackson, Allan, en Simon assessed moet word. Ek het met die prinsipaal gepraat, en hy het vir my gesê dat ek die ouers moet inkry en alles aan hulle moes verduidelik. Jackson en Allan se ouers het net ‘nee’ gesê, dat daar niks verkeerd met hulle kind was nie en dat ek nogal ‘n slegte juffrou is wat hulle kind geslaan het. Gelukkig het Simon se ouers ingestem.  Wat moet ek nou met Jackson en Allan maak? Jackson kan nie weer graad 3 druip nie: die skool sal hom oorsit na graad 4 en daar sal hy ‘n ander juffrou se probleem wees. Die kinders kan ek nog mee werk, maar die ouers! So praat hulle met die prinsipaal as ons vir hulle inroep: ‘My kind stout? Nog nooit! Ek het niks probleme by die huis nie. Dit is seker die juffrou wat nie reg kan onderwys nie. My kind sê dat hy niks gedoen het nie; ek glo hom’. En as ons buite die skool kom en die prinsipaal is weg, is dit weer ‘n ander saak. Die ouers dreig ‘n mens sommer en vloek jou uit”.

“Persoonlik weet ek dat ek te geheg aan die kinders is. Ek ken vir hulle van graad 1. Ek is soos hulle mammie. Dit is nie goed vir hulle nie; dit is nie goed vir my nie, because I

sometimes get too emotionally involved. Ek baby hulle te veel; hulle het net baie liefde nodig; they don't often get attention at home, veral as mammie en pappie baklei het. Die skool, met al sy probleme, kry my onder. Ek weet dat dinge hier nie sal verander nie want die gemeenskap sal nie verander nie. Hier is goed wat nou aangaan wat ek nooit tevore van gehoor het nie, [she whispers] soos child abuse. 'n Mens mag nie van hierdie soort goed praat nie, but we must educate our children. Ek self wil op 'n course gaan oor child abuse want ek weet niks daarvan nie. [A long silence follows] I must tell you I have sleepless nights worrying about these children; som aande huil ek; ek maak myself sick. My dokter sê vir my dat my hernia al hoe erger word want ek het te veel stress". Mrs. Sea often emphasises that she feels more comfortable and competent dealing with learners with learning problems. Issues of neglect and abuse are new to her, and she often does not know what to do or who to approach.



“Elke oggend as ek skool toe kom, kry ek daardie ruik. Die bure maak vuur in sink dromme; dit gaan in my neus, my klere, my kos; ek haat dit”. Through interviews with Mrs. Sea, one gets the impression that her main fear is the governing body and the principal. Mrs. Sea is of the opinion that “Die prinsipaal kies altyd die kant van die ouers, en die governing body wil net gou-gou vir 'n mens warning briefies uitskryf. As 'n mens aantuigings maak, sê dat die ouers sleg is, sue die ouers die skool gou-gou; hulle sê dat die law sê dat ek bewyse moet hê”.

“Ek dink my grootste gevaar is dat ek aangesteek word deur een van die kinders met tuberculosis of AIDS [pause]. Hierdie ouers sê vir ons niks. Wat as ek vir my familie

aansteek? Ek moet kop hou. As die kinders voor my hoes, stoot ek vir hulle weg; as hulle val en ek die wond moet skoon maak, gebruik ek surgical gloves. I take no chances.

Because of all the stuff that I have seen here at the school, I feel that I am stricter and harder on my own children. Ek laat hulle nie alleen uitgaan nie; my husband and I drop them and fetch them. Niks van girlfriends en boyfriends nie, o nee. Hulle weet as hulle met 'n slegte report huis toe kom, sal ek soos 'n mal mens aangaan. I want them to make something of themselves. I don't want them to struggle like me or end up like some of the families in Whaleside. Respek en dissipline, dit is baie belangrik. My kinders weet as hulle onbeskof is, sal ek vir hulle gou klap. Hulle weet hulle ma sal nie staan vir onbeskofte kinders nie. Baie keer praat my man met my, en hy sê dat ek nie regverdig is nie en dat my kinders goed is, en dat ek 'n chill pill moet vat [she laughs]. Ek kan dit nie help nie, die skool het my hard gemaak”.



5.6 Meeting the learners

The following diary entries are descriptions of the 40 learners in Mrs. Sea's Grade 3 classroom and include some of the things that happened in class.

This diary entry was written a month after I arrived at Whaleside Primary.

Diary extract, April, 2000:

...For the first few weeks at Whaleside Primary, I received inquisitive looks, was inundated with questions on who I was, where I came from, where I teach, and why I was at Whaleside. For the first few mornings, when I entered the class, there would be a hush of silence. As I observed the learners, they listened to all Mrs. Sea's instructions, worked quietly. "Wow!" I thought, "Every educators' dream class".

But the novelty soon wore off, and the silence was replaced by the hustle and bustle of learners drawing, painting, and building. Many of the learners like moving about in their chairs, so there is this constant screeching noise, learners shouting at each other, others banging toy blocks together, whilst the aeroplanes zoom over the school.

I was struck by how tiny these learners were; quite a few of them still sucked their thumbs. Often it was obvious that the children's hair was not brushed, nor their faces washed. Some mornings they would come into class looking really untidy with dirt rings on their collars, no socks, wearing casual clothes and school jackets of another school. Twenty percent of the class did not wear their full school uniform, simply because their parents could not afford it. Mrs. Sea told me that "Many of the learners have older siblings at the school and now wear their hand-me-downs; these learners are not fortunate enough to get a new school uniform".

At this time, I reflected on the impact that the weather has on the school.

Diary entry, June, 2000:

...By ten o' clock, it is very hot; at first I thought the bad odour was coming from outside, but every time I walked past the learners, I would get this stinky smell. Mrs. Sea said that many of the learners don't wash, nor do they wash their clothes. She admitted that sometimes she is too embarrassed to tell the parents because they have the same problem. The winter season brings its own bag of problems. The classrooms are unbearably cold, many of the learners do not wear socks, some come to school soaking wet from the rain, while others come to school sick, because there is nobody to look after them during the day, while their parents are at work.

This entry I wrote after a particularly interesting few weeks at school.

Diary entry, June, 2000:

...Most days I sit jotting down extensive notes. "Rene, wat maak jy?" Mrs. Sea screamed. I bounced out of my chair out of fright. This is the first time I have heard Mrs. Sea shout. Mrs. Sea is not the only educator who shouts. As I walk past other classes, I hear the educators shouting, "Hou julle monne, gaan uit my klas uit, jy's bladdie (swear word) onbeskof".

Shouting is not seen as a form of punishment; that is how they communicate. The learners love to complain, "Juffrou, kyk vir Duane; juffrou, Robert het my potlood", "Juffrou, juffrou, kom kyk", "Ek gaan nou vir juffrou sê".

The following journal entries illustrate the social climate in the classroom, school, and community.

Diary entry, July, 2000:

...The learners seem to thrive on Mrs. Sea reprimanding other learners, but by the same token, many of the learners need Mrs. Sea's constant approval; everything they do, every sum, every drawing, must get her stamp of approval. Mrs. Sea is therefore constantly inundated with requests or questions: "Juffrou, is dit reg?", "Juffrou, kyk my prent", "Juffrou, merk my werk".

I thoroughly enjoy watching the learners play during intervals. They are very good at imitating what they see on television, at home, and at school. The girls love playing skooltjie, skooltjie. Abigail stands with a ruler in her hand, then shouts and hits the sand, which represents her make-believe learners.

Instances of violence dominate news day on Monday. The learners get an opportunity to share with the class what they did during their weekend. If there was a gang fight, the learners excitedly explain the role their family played in the fight: "My uncle het daai 28 (gang member) gesteek, my pa het gesê hulle het daai man sat gemaak, my broer se oog was opgeswel".

"Yo, juffrou, hulle het so voor ons huis gefight; daai een man gee sommer vir hom 'n uppercut so, so [child acts out fight scene] gegee".

Most of these learners love cleaning up. They enjoy washing their cups, sweeping the class, dusting the charts, and packing away their books. I complimented Mrs. Sea for getting both girls and boys involved in cleaning the class. She grins and says that many of the children who are barely 8 years old have chores at home; they have to clean their own rooms, wash the dishes at night; some even have to do their own washing.

At this time, I reflected on a few incidents that gave me much insight into the learners.

Diary entry, July, 2000:

...After 3 months at the school, I am no longer alarmed when learners fall asleep on the mat. These children are up at five in the morning, are dismissed at twelve thirty, and must then wait for their older siblings until three. Many dawdle around the school until three, because their parents cannot afford to send them to aftercare. After three, they then go to a friend's house, where their parents fetch them at six in the evening.

I learnt quite a bit about the culture of the school and the people just by interacting with the students. On one particular occasion, Mrs. Sea took the children onto the field for a class discussion. As the discussion progressed, two children crawled towards me and gave me a stick about 30 cm long. Confused, I asked them, “Wat moet ek met die stok maak?” Another learner close by replied nonchalantly, “Juffrou moet ons slaan met die stok as ons nie luister nie”.

Another incident that comes to mind was when I supervised Mrs. Sea’s class for the day. I saw this as an opportunity to interact more closely with the learners. As I sat reading to the learners, the girls giggled while they touched my trousers, stockings, and shoes. “Juffrou het mooi klêre”, one said.

This extract traces my first experience working with the learners.

Diary entry, September, 2000:

...It did not take long before I was scrambling about the class, helping this one, reprimanding that one, handing out worksheets to a point where I shouted loudly, “Bly asseblief stil!”

I felt so ashamed; shouting went against everything that I was taught. These learners must be traumatised, I thought. Just as quickly as I shouted, my apologies came tumbling out. While apologising, I had 40 very amused kids looking at me until Garth stood up and said, “Juffrou moet ons slaan, ons is stout,”

“Yo! My ma skreeu, dan spring ek sommer” Mike commented.

“Nee my ma skreeu dan blaf die honde ha, ha”.

“My ma skreeu die hardste, jy kan haar sommer onder in die straat hoor”. I sat speechless listening to this debate on whose mother shouts the loudest.

5.7 A day in the life of Mrs. Sea

Mrs. Sea has a set routine, day in and day out. Every morning, she greets the learners and they sit on the mat. They revise work done, recite the days of the week, and discuss any news that the learners themselves have. While doing this, Mrs. Sea opens all the windows and does roll call. She scrutinises the learners and tentatively listens to the news that they

have. She explains, “Elke oggend moet ek kyk hoe lyk hulle gesiggies. Wie lyk asof hulle nie gisteraand geëet het nie, of wie lyk ‘n bietjie siek, of wie het gisteraand gehuil. Ek moet ook goed luister, want so kom die stories uit van wat by die huis gebeur het en so weet ek as dinge sleg of goed gaan. It helps that these learners live in a close community; everyone knows everyone’s business”.

The learners eagerly inform Mrs. Sea of the previous night’s events, the gang fight, the parties, and the arguments. Often, it is the learners’ parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, or aunts who were involved. The learners are quick to inform Mrs. Sea who is absent and why. Mrs. Sea knows that sometimes these learners are home because their unemployed parents are recovering from a late party or the learners themselves overslept as their parents leave at the crack of dawn to work in the factories or simply that they are just bunking school. Mrs. Sea explains that the truth always comes out. The learners are incapable of keeping a secret, and the community thrives on gossip.

Mrs. Sea starts off every day with a Bible lesson and spends most of the morning doing revision. A photograph of the Bible corner is included in Appendix 7. Senior learners deliver two loaves of bread and a half-filled bucket of soya milk to each class before interval at ten. Mrs. Sea has devised a duty roster for the class so that every learner gets an opportunity to pour the milk in the glasses and hand out the bread.

The learners had visited the planetarium the previous week, and during interval Mrs. Sea was feverishly preparing the classroom for the lesson. She placed coloured paper,

cellophane, crayons, glue, and scissors on each table while gulping down her tea and chewing her bread. Mrs. Sea said, “Jy moet net weet juffrou, ek doen dit nie elke dag nie, o nee! Ek hou van my tee gedurende pouse; ek hou van die stilte; geen kinders nie, net stilte”. Mrs. Sea explained that she wanted the class to create their own solar system. “Die leerlinge het die planetarium so geniet; toe besluit ek om ‘n les daaroor te doen. Ek moes maar self al die cellophane, Pritt, skêre, en kleurpapier gaan koop, want die skool het niks. Ons onderwysers word al klaar so min betaal; nou moet ons nog al ons eie stationery koop. Onthou dit klink maar min, maar 43 skêre en genoeg Pritt, cellophane, en kleurpapier vir 43 kinders kos baie geld. Gelukkig werk al die graad 3 juffrouens mooi saam; ons deel al ons resources met mekaar; as ek nou klaar met die skêre is, stuur ek dit gou na juffrou Adam’s se klas”.



The learners barge back into the classroom after interval, some falling over each other as they scramble to enter the class. Some cannot contain their curiosity and walk to their desks. One look from Mrs. Sea and they quickly join the rest of the class on the mat. Melissa walks up to Mrs. Sea crying. She asks, “Wie het vir Melissa geslaan?” Melissa points at Christopher. “Juffrou hy het op my plek gesit”. “Ons slaan nie vir mekaar nie, o nee. Sê nou mooi vir haar jy is jammer, kom nou”. Mrs. Sea then explains to the class what a solar system is. She shows the class pictures of various planets and they discuss what they saw at the planetarium. She informs the learners that they will be creating their own *sonnestelsel*. There is an excited buzz; some learners start to jump up and down; Liezel runs to her table while others clap their hands excitedly. “Kom ons raak nou rustig, Liezel! Ek steek my hand op en as ek my hand laat sak, moet almal still bly”. Silence

follows. Simon shouts, “Juffrou ek wil toilet toe gaan”. Suddenly, four other learners jump up and shout, “Ek wil ook toilet toe gaan”. Later Mrs. Sea explains that she learnt very quickly not to make a fuss about some things, “As een kind besluit om toilet toe te gaan, wil die hele klas gaan; that is just the way they are. Maar as ek eers nee sê, dan staan en dans hulle en hou hulle hande by hul privaat plekke; that drives me mad”.

As the learners cut, paste, and draw, Mrs. Sea moves from table to table assisting the learners and checking on their progress. Every now and then, the hustle and bustle is interrupted by Mrs. Sea’s loud voice, “Ek het oë agter my kop; ek kan sien wat jy doen”. Two of the learners are pasting cellophane on each other’s faces. The classroom project is taking shape; there are oohs and aahs coming from the learners as Mrs. Sea pastes their creations onto the windows of the class. The cellophane catches the sun rays and the learners are in awe of its effects. Simon is quietly scribbling on Christopher’s pages. “Simon, ek gaan jou slaan, jong man!” Mrs. Sea shouts.

Mrs. Sea raises her hand and says, “Wie se oë is nie by my hand nie? Laat ons nou almal skoon maak. Help vir juffrou, asseblief, ek vra mooi; dan kan ons almal lekker huistoe gaan. Bring al my potlode, crayons, Pritt, en skêre, asseblief”. The learners often do not return the stationery. Mrs. Sea says she knows who the culprits are. “Ag foei-tog, hulle het nie speelgoed by die huis nie, en baie keer bring hulle dit terug”. There is chaos in the class as the learners run up and down, throwing away their offcuts, some packing their bags, while others attempt to sweep the class with a broom double their own size. The

day, like any other day, ends with a prayer in which the learners thank God for their families, friends, and educator.

This chapter has placed the community, school, classroom, educator, and learners into context. Chapter 6 is a presentation of portraits of some of the learners experiencing barriers to learning. Therefore, the strategies Mrs. Sea uses to accommodate learners with special needs are discussed at length, drawing on classroom practices, interviews, and observations.



CHAPTER 6

SPECIAL NEEDS IN MRS. SEA'S CLASSROOM

6.1 Introduction

This chapter describes some of the learners experiencing barriers to learning in Mrs. Sea's class, some of the strategies Mrs. Sea employs to accommodate these learners, and the sources of support she calls upon. Needs and strategies were identified by observing Mrs. Sea and the learners in the classroom environment and following her interaction with the learners and interview sessions held with her. Practices are illustrated by classroom examples. These strategies are largely based on her attitude, personal belief, training, and years of teaching experience. As a starting point, this chapter provides insight into how Mrs. Sea identifies learners with special needs.

6.2 Strategies Mrs. Sea employs to identify learners experiencing barriers to learning

Mrs. Sea recognises that there are several learners with learning difficulties in her classroom. Mrs. Sea says, "As ek nou na die hele klas kyk, moet ek sê dat die meeste van hulle probleme het met lees en wiskunde. Ons almal weet dat as jy sukkel om te lees, sal

jy sukkel met jou wiskunde. Hulle vorder goed met Engels, maar, soos baie mense, dink hulle in Afrikaans en dan skryf hulle in Engels”.

“Ek moet sê dat baie van hulle net lui is, maar daar is ‘n handvol wat miskien probleme by die huis het, of hulle is nie so gesond nie, of hulle het *wel* ‘n probleem met lees en wiskunde”. Mrs. Sea says that “Somtyds dink ek dat ek ‘n slegte juffrou is, maar die kinders doen nie hulle werk nie, niemand help vir hulle as hulle sukkel nie, en ek kan nie baie tyd met een taak spandeer nie. Hulle aandag,... ag nou ja, baie van hulle sal liewers buite wees. Ek probeer, I do revision, ek gee ekstra lesse na skool, maar as hulle nie hulle sommetjies practice of lees by die huis nie, dan sal hulle nie vorder met hulle skool werk nie”.



Mrs. Sea often makes a diagnosis herself: “As ek moet wag vir die school clinic, sal ek heel jaar wag. Somtyds is dit baie maklik, soos in die geval van Melanie, Paul, en Stephen”. Mrs. Sea seems very proud of the fact that she was able to diagnose these learners’ problems and present parents with guidelines and solutions for the problem. She believes that often the problem is caused by something that has happened at home, as is the case with Melanie and Paul, and, in other cases, it is something the child is born with, as seems to be the case with Stephen. “Somtyds voel ek dat ek net die probleem myself moet oplos. Soos hulle sê, ‘The wheels of bureaucracy turn slowly’. Ek kan nie ‘n jaar wag terwyl een van my kinders op die ‘waiting list’ wag nie. Wat word nou van die kinders wat ek nie kan help nie? Hulle suffer; hulle moet maar op die waiting list wag”.

“Ek moet eerlik wees, we never have time to sit and analyse each and every child; gewoonlik is dit daardie kinders wat baie stout is wat ons aandag kry; dan vra ek vir myself, ‘Is daar miskien iets anders verkeerd met die kind?’ Ons het onlangs ‘n teacher support team begin. Ons sukkel maar; maar ons sal daar kom”.

“Daar is nie iets specific wat ek doen as ek dink dat daar iets verkeerd is met ’n kind nie. I’m like Sherlock Holmes sometimes: as ek suspicious is, moet ek my ore en oë oop hou”. Sadly, Mrs. Sea’s suspicions are usually confirmed through idle gossip that makes its way to her from neighbours and friends of the learners. “Die ouers is te skaam om vir my te sê daar’s iets verkeerd; dan hoor ek van hulle bure ’n paar weke later dat die of daai by die huis aangaan. Baie keer is dit die antie of ouma wat saggies vir my kom sê wat die probleem is”.



Although Mrs. Sea has no formal qualifications in working with learners experiencing barriers to learning, she does comprehend that if a learner’s behaviour changes drastically or he/she regresses in his/her development, this could be indicative of a deeper problem. Her readings have made her realise that “Every child can learn and each teacher should find out how the child learns and how the child thinks. They should try to find out which teaching method helps the child and then educate the child in this way, keeping in mind their situation at school and at home”. Mrs. Sea feels that her classroom is an example of an inclusive classroom, where there are children with varied barriers to learning, but where often the lack of support and her lack of knowledge is to the detriment of that learner.

“The remedial course I am doing is also helping a lot. It is one thing to suspect that something is wrong, but you must be able to do something about it. This remedial course focuses on reading problems, so I can now look out for problems in this area. Ek is nou so baie jare in die onderwys dat ek somtyds net weet dat ‘n kind ‘n probleem het. Nie almal dink so nie”. The following diary entry highlights that many of the educators believe that the learners are just naughty, rude, and come from bad homes.

...One Monday morning an educator found her classroom in absolute disarray: posters torn, desks broken, and faeces smeared on the walls. The school found out that it was a group of high school boys who had gained entry into the classroom by lifting a grade 2 boy through a broken window. Later, the educator found out that it was the grade 2 boy, a learner at Whaleside Primary, who had defecated in her classroom. Her response was, “Daai kind het ‘n goeie pak nodig; dit sal hom reg ruk”. Other educators nearby nodded in agreement and complained that the child was rude and a troublemaker. “Daardie kind moet ons weg stuur,” says Mrs. Sea. “As jy net na hom kyk, of met hom praat, sal jy sien dat hy disturbed is...”



6.3 Learners experiencing barriers to learning in Mrs. Sea’s classroom

Mrs. Sea has educated, nurtured, and loved these learners for the past three years. Since she has seen them through grade 1 and grade 2, she feels confident about assessing her learners. These learners were identified as having barriers to learning after careful observation by Mrs. Sea, an analysis of the learners’ academic progress, an analysis of classroom incidents in which learners were involved, and discussions held with parents. Mrs. Sea has identified over twenty-six learners as having barriers to learning with regards to their intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development. Only twelve learners are presented here, chosen because their case studies succinctly present an

overall picture of the diverse barriers to learning that Mrs. Sea is faced with. Similar descriptions of the remaining fourteen learners appear as vignettes in Appendix 4.

Simon

Mrs. Sea suspects that Simon was born with foetal alcohol syndrome. She observed that he had a tiny build, unusually small facial features, and was unable to concentrate and sit still for long. He was unable to grasp basic mathematics and struggled when writing. Mrs. Sea describes him as very babyish, sucks his thumb, is unable to tie his shoelaces, very playful, and often cannot hold his bladder. “Hy speel nog met die kleuterskool kinders gedurende pouse; hy kan nog nie reg socialise met die ander kinders wat sy ouderdom is nie”.

Mrs. Sea says that Simon lacks organisational skills; he is always losing his work and forgetting to complete homework tasks. Mrs. Sea further explains, “As jy nou deur sy mathematics portfolio gaan, sal jy sien dat hy baie van sy somme verkeerd gekry het en hy teken op baie van sy take. Simon tel nog op sy vingers as hy sy somme doen. As hy nie nou hard begin werk nie, gaan hy weer volgende jaar in my klas sit. Dikwels kan ek sien dat hy nie die werk verstaan nie. Ek sit by hom en met ‘n paar ander kinders en verduidelik die somme tien keer oor. Simon kry dan nog steeds die somme verkeerd. Ek dink daar is iets verkeerd met sy brein.

Dit is nou die geval met Simon. Hy lees nie; hy hou daarvan om deur die boeke te blaai en na die prentjies te kyk. Sy skryf werk is net so swak: hy sukkel om sy potlood te hou, sal een of twee woordjies skryf, en as ek weg kyk, begin hy maar weer om te teken”.

Deon

Last year Deon steadily started losing weight. Mrs. Sea contacted Deon's mother, who explained that he was just losing his baby fat. Mrs. Sea called in the school nurse, Mrs. Brummer, who noticed that Deon showed symptoms of kidney failure. The school nurse informed Deon's mother, who promised to follow it up. A month later, Deon was rushed to hospital where he stayed for three weeks.

The school nurse, Mrs. Brummer, took a personal interest in Deon. She told Mrs. Sea that Deon was so sick that he hardly recognised his mother. "Nou, so 'n mens moet ons by die polisie aankla". said Mrs. Sea (referring to Deon's mother). Mrs. Brummer and Mrs. Sea bought Deon pyjamas as he did not have any, and spoilt him with gifts. Mrs. Sea spent many of her Sundays tutoring Deon so that he would not lag behind with his schoolwork. A year down the line, Mrs. Sea and Mrs. Brummer are still keeping a watchful eye on Deon as his mother did not take him for his follow-up treatment or check ups.



Francis

"His mother also works in the factory. The neighbour wakes Francis in the morning and gives him a lift to and from school. The neighbour ensures that Francis is washed and fed by the time his mom comes home at about eight".

Mrs. Sea describes him as a well-mannered, chubby, and quiet boy who enjoys mathematics, but hates to read and write. Francis has already completed all the term's maths exercises and is currently working on some grade 4 calculations". Mrs. Sea says that she has no explanation (for Francis's problems), "Francis bly met sy ma, maar sy spandeer nie baie tyd met hom nie. Francis doen amper nooit sy huiswerk nie, haat om te skryf, maar gee net vir hom 'n paar sommetjies en dan is hy baie gelukkig". "Hy steur hom nie aan die ander kinders nie. Christopher, Allan, en Ashley roep vir hom 'vettie' en baie keer bully hulle vir hom. Francis kla nooit nie; hy loop net weg van hulle af".

Melanie

Mrs. Sea says, “Ek krap kop as dit by Melanie kom. Sy het maar eers verlede jaar begin stutter toe haar ma weer getrou het. Sy was baie geheg aan haar pa wat skielik van ‘n hart aanval oorlede is.

She tries her best, maar as sy moet praat, word sy so opgewerk en anxious dat die woorde net nie kan uit kom nie. Ek vind dit baie snaaks dat Melanie net stutter as sy voor die klas moet lees of praat. As ek met haar alleen praat, praat sy normaal. Ek weet nie of dit reg is nie, maar ek vra nie meer vir Melanie om voor die klas te praat nie. It is just too stressful for her. She plays with her hands nervously, and needs lots of encouragement and help. Ek dink haar ma se nuwe man is baie streng en Melanie is ‘n bietjie bang vir hom. Ek moet nog daardie storie uitvind”.

Mrs. Sea regards Melanie as one of her top students, a student who takes her schoolwork very seriously and enjoys helping her peers.



Deidre

Through discussions with Deidre, Mrs. Sea found out that Deidre does not know why or how her father passed on. She told Mrs. Sea that her mother told her, “Jou pa is ‘n baie slegte man”. Mrs. Sea finds Deidre to be a very pleasant girl who goes out of her way to help her peers. She is always cleaning the classroom, dusting the shelves, packing books, or rinsing the milk glasses. During a class discussion on what chores the learners did at home, Deidre astonished Mrs. Sea and her peers when she described how she makes the beds, sweeps the house, and washes her school clothes.

Mrs. Sea explains that “Deidre’s mom works in a factory; she leaves home at four in the morning only to return at eight in the evening. Deidre gets up on her own, gets ready for school, and returns home every afternoon to an empty home. Dit neem baie harde werk om na ‘n kind te kyk. Ek admire Deidre se ma, wat ook Saterdag en Sunday werk sodat sy dit kan bekostig om vir Deidre in die skool te hou”.

Robin

“Die arme kind se ouers is geskei toe Robin in graad een was. Ja regtig. Ek onthou hoe ek met die mammië gesit het en na haar geluister het, haar trane weg gevee het, en haar aangemoedig het om haar man te los. Drie jaar later, in die begin van die jaar, het ek weer gesit met die ma (met ‘n lelike blou oog) en na haar geluister. Ek voel nie jammer vir so ‘n soort vroumens nie.

In elke geval, in Julie het Robin vir my kom vertel dat sy en haar ma nou by haar ouma bly. Ek het die arme kind vir drie jaar dop gehou en gesien wat hierdie situasie aan haar gedoen het. Haar ouers se probleme het haar erg beskadig; ek het nooit geweet of Robin gelukkig of hartseer skool toe gaan kom nie. Een dag gelukkig, een dag hartseer. Een van die ander mammië het vir my gesê dat Robin se ouers maar altyd gestry het en dat haar pa baie keer die huis verlaat het, en ‘n paar dae later weer huis toe gekom het. Ek het dit so uitgewerk: Robin het seker al die drama dop gehou. Toe, as Robin hartseer was, het ek geweet dat haar ouers gestry het, en as sy gelukkig was het haar papie miskien weer huis toe gekom.

Ek moet sê, ek persoonlik glo nie in egskeiding nie. In *die* geval, kan ek sien dat Robin somer baie beter is vanaf die tyd wat sy en haar ma by haar ouma bly. There are no more sad days en Robin vorder nou mooi met haar skoolwerk”.

Linda

“Sy kom vuil skooltoe , uses obscenities, runs around while I’m teaching en wil net met die netjiese kinders speel”, Mrs. Sea explains. Haar hare is my ever end; dit lyk soos ‘n regte bos. Ek het ‘n kam gekoop en dikwels kam ek haar hare in die oggend.

Die arme kind se skoolwerk is morsig en deurmekaar. Linda steel die ander meisies se goed, soos hulle pom poms vir hulle hare of ‘n lucky packet ring. So, elke middag moet ek deur Linda se sak gaan, en elke middag sweer sy dat sy niks gevat het nie; maar gereeld kry ek die meisies se goed in haar sak”.

Both Linda’s parents are unemployed; they have no permanent address and she often sleeps over at friends’ houses when her parents have forgotten to fetch her from school. The whole school knows that Linda’s mom and dad go door to door in the evening, begging for food, and they are known to loiter outside the local bottlestore.

Helen

“Gewoonlik luister ek nie veel na wat die kinders sê as hulle speel of net rond sit nie, maar somtyds vang ek so ‘n stukkie van ‘n storie. Helen het vir Susan gesê dat Susan saam met haar moet gaan om fotos te neem by haar pa se vriend se plek. Helen het vir haar vertel dat die man vir haar enige iets sou koop om net fotos te neem, maar dat sy vir niemand moes sê nie.

Ek het vir Helen gedurende pouse ingeroep en lag-lag vir haar vroe gevra oor hierdie fotos. Ek wou nie vir haar bang maak nie. Die goed wat sy vir my gese het, het vir my amper siek gemaak. Sy het vir my vertel dat die man fotos van haar in haar onderklere geneem het. Ek het onmiddelik vir haar ouers geskakel; hulle wou my nie glo nie [she shakes her head]. Ek het glad nie geweet wat ek moes doen nie. Toe bel ek die social worker en sy het die skool kno besoek. Sy het gesê dat sy daardelik die saak sal ondersoek; dit was die laaste wat ek van haar gehoor het, en dit was drie weke gelede”.

Jackson

“Jackson is een kind wat ek mee sukkel. Hy het graad 2 gedruip en het graad 3 verlede jaar gedruip. Hy sukkel om te lees en is baie lui om te skryf. Hy is die oudste en sterkste in die klas en baie van die kinders is bang vir hom. As Jackson nie sy way kry nie, dan maak hy die kinders seer. Ek het sy ouers baie keer ingeroep; hulle sê net ek moet Jackson slat. As Jackson hierdie jaar weer druipe, moet ek hom oor na graad 4 toe stuur; dan sal hy ‘n ander juffrou se probleem word. Jy weet mos die department se ‘n kind kan nie meer as twee keer druipe nie. Jackson is slim, maar hy lus nou net nie vir skool nie. Die ander kinders moet sy werk doen. As jy na sy portfolio kyk is daar drie of vier verskillende handskrifte. Hy is nog ‘n bietjie bang vir my, dankie tog, anders sal hy vir my ‘n ding of twee gesê het.

Daar was ‘n tyd verlede jaar toe die kinders vir my sê het dat Jackson hulle huistoe vat en hulle daar seer maak. Ek het gedog dat Jackson hulle bully, maar toe het Quinton vir my gesê dat [silence, as Mrs. Sea looks visibly distraught] Jackson aan sy privaat.. [silence] jy weet wat ek wil sê. Ek het Jackson se ouers onmiddellik ingekry; hulle het geweier om te help. Toe bel ek die tante wat ook saam met hulle bly; sy is by die huis elke dag. Die tante was baie skaam, maar het later vir my vertel dat Jackson se ouer broers meisies huistoe gebring het. Jackson het baie keer met hulle gesit en gesels en God weet alleen watter soort goed hulle gedoen het.

Ek het Quinton se ouers ingeroep en vir hulle gesê dat hulle liewers nie vir Quinton moet toelaat om na Jackson se huis te gaan nie. Hulle was geskok. Ek het ‘n storiëtjie opgemaak dat Jackson net ‘n bietjie stout is and ‘n bad influence is on Quinton. Juffrou, jy moet verstaan, ek moes die leuen vertel, want Jackson se ouers kan my sue. Jy lees amper elke dag in die koerant hoe die ouers nou vir die skool sue, en dan wen hulle. Ek kan nie bekostig om my job te verloor nie”.

Allan

“God! hierdie kind kom van ‘n ordentlike familie. Sy pa werk baie hard. Hy broke met vrugte en groente en werk tot laat in die aand. Allan se ma is weg; ek weet nie wat die storie is nie. Allan sê sy ma is dood maar ek dink nie dit is waar nie. Sy ouma van sestig kyk na hom. Allan luister nie na haar nie; hy kom en gaan soos hy wil. Hy gaan nooit reguit huistoe nie. Hy weet sy pa kom maar eers om 10 uur huistoe; dan loop hy die hele aand rond”.

Mrs. Sea says that Allan loves to fight: his favourite game is ‘street fighter’. Allan mimics these characters’ style of fighting and his nickname is Rya, one of the popular characters of the game. Allan, Christopher, Ashley, and Jackson have formed their own gang at school and spend their intervals enticing the older grade 4’s to fight with them. During one lesson about careers, Allan proudly stood up and said that he wanted to be a gangster, not like the ones in Whaleside, but like the ones with lots of money, cars, and cell phones “.

Allan is ‘n slim kind, maar hy is baie lui. Hy doen nie sy huiswerk nie, en werk net as ek dreig om met sy pa te praat. Jy sien Juffrou [Mrs. Sea whispers] Allan se pa het ‘n bietjie van ‘n temper en as hy vir Allan begin slaan, roep die ouma vir die bure om hom weg van Allen te kry. Nou verstaan jy. Dit is hoekom ek nie keer op keer sy pa wil bel nie; maar soms is ek desperaat. Ek wil nie hê dat Allen weer in my klas moet sit nie”.

Enver

“Ek gaan nie toelaat dat Enver ook ‘n vrot appel word nie. Hy is deel van Christopher en Jackson se gang, maar net gedurende pouse. Hy is ‘n oulike seun wat altyd sy bes probeer. Sy skoolwerk vorder mooi sedert ek met sy ouers gepraat het. Ek stuur nou en dan ‘n paar ekstra sommetjies huistoe.

Aai! [sighs] die probleem is die: Ashley en Christopher kan hom so gou in ‘n ding insleep en, voor jy dit weet, is Enver ook in die sop. Vir Enver gaan ek reg ruk; jy sien Enver se broer is die leier van ‘n gang. Die arme ouers het gesukkel met die kind en ek het gehoor dat die pa uiteindelik vir hom uit die huis gegooi het. So Ashley, Christopher, Jackson, en Allen dink Enver is so cool want sy broer is ‘n gangster.

Verstaan jy nou. Ek het vir Enver by Francis en ‘n paar meisies gesit. Die meisies haat dit as die seuns by hulle tafels kom, so ek weet hulle sal gou kla as Jackson of Christopher by Enver kom. Sien juffrou, ek moet sharp wees, anders sal hulle my klas oorneem. Die meisies help ook vir hom met sy werk. Francis is goed vir hom want hulle help mekaar. Francis help vir hom met sy wiskunde en Enver help Francis met sy Engels”.

Christopher

“This is a problem child. Elke dag doen Christopher iets stouts. He lives with his mother and his father is in prison”. Mrs. Sea thinks that Christopher is in denial, because for the past three years he has told his friends that his dad lives in Johannesburg and will be fetching him in December. “As daar nou een kind is wat na daardie skool moet gaan vir stoute kinders, is dit Christopher. As ek vir al die kinders so dreig, werk dit vir ‘n dag en dan is hulle stroopsoet.

Ek moet erken, I am often at my wits end when it comes to Christopher. Ek praat en praat en praat; niks help nie. Ek dink daar is iets verkeerd met sy brein; hy sukkel nog altyd met graad 2 wiskunde. Hy en Jackson het eers saam met Francis gesit. Hulle twee het net al die take van Francis gecopy. Kan jy dit glo? Ek het mos gedink dit is snaaks; skielik kry die kinders al hulle sommetjies reg. Nou en dan, gee ek vir Francis graad 4 wiskunde. Nou, hierdie twee stoutgatte luister mos nie na my in die klas nie. Hulle copy die graad 4 werk in plaas van om hulle eie sommetjies klaar te maak. Ek het vir hulle so uitgevang. Nou sit Christopher en Jackson hier reg onder my neus, dat ek vir hulle kan watch. Soos Jackson, gaan Christopher druipe. Ek wil nie vir hom in my klas hê nie. Ek wens die prinsipaal expel net vir die lot van hulle. Christopher se arme ma is ‘n baie saggearde persoon. Sy is gereeld in die kerk en werk baie hard om vir haar en Christopher aan die lewe te hou. Sy het so bitter gehuil toe die prinsipaal vir haar ingeroep het en vir haar vertel dat Christopher een van die kinders is wat goed van die tuck-shop gesteel het. Ons het haar so jammer gekry toe sy vir ons vertel hoe sy met Christopher sukkel. Hoe Christopher nooit na haar luister nie, en dat sy net op hoop opgegee het. Toe sê sy dat ons asseblief vir Christopher ‘n lekker pak moet gee as hy stout is. Baie van die ouers maak so; hulle sê hulle gee hul toestemming vir die juffrou om die kind te slaan. Wat moet ons nou doen? Christopher steel sommer Nawaal se nuwe penne, of hy skop vir Dalme.

6.4 Strategies for working with learners experiencing barriers to learning

6.4.1 General discipline

Many of the strategies Mrs. Sea employs to manage her classroom are reflected in the text ‘A Day in the Life of Mrs. Sea’ in Chapter 5 (page 128). In this chapter, these strategies will be discussed in greater detail.

Mrs. Sea relates that “As the years go on, you, as an educator, become more and more clever when it comes to discipline. Jy moet sharp wees, anders sal die kinders van jou ’n gek maak. So, die goed wat ek in die klas doen om die kinders stil te hou is maar goed wat ek hier en daar opgetel het. Laat ek nou vir jou iets leer: jy moet so min soos moontlik skreeu. Jy is nog jonk; jy moet na jou stem kyk. As jy baie skreeu, raak die kinders gewoond daaraan. Dit is hoekom baie van die onderwysers soos mal mense skreeu en skreeu en skreeu [she whispers]. Die kinders worry nie. Ek gee net een harde skreeu, dan hop die kinders en daar’s stilte [she laughs]; ek het vir jou ook gesien hop”.

“Die musiek juffrou by die skool waar ek voorheen geteach het, het baie min gepraat. As sy op die tamboeryn geslaan het, het die kinders geweet dat hulle op die mat moes sit. As sy die triangle gebruik het, het hulle geweet dat hulle hul boeke moes uithaal. So, het ek ook geleer”.

“Van die goed doen ek net omdat ek moeg is. Jy sal nog sien: by tienuur is my keel droog en my kop lekker seer. Ek sê vir hulle, ‘Ek steek my hand op en as ek my hand sak, moet almal stil bly’. Dan dink ek, ‘Dankie vader, stilte vir ‘n paar minute’. These silent moments keep me sane”.

“Ek het sommer gou geleer hoe om die kinders ook in te span, sodat ek nie keer op keer dieselfde goed oor en oor moet verduidelik nie. As ons nou besig is met ‘n taak, verduidelik ek vir hulle wat hulle moet doen, dan kry ek ‘n leerling om weer die opdrag oor te sê. Die kinders geniet dit baie, soos jy gesien het. Hulle spring op en klim op mekaar om gekies te word. Wat hulle nie weet nie, is dat ek op hierdie wyse verseker dat hulle goed na my luister”.



“Die kinders is maar klein; hulle leer nog hoe om stil te sit, hoe om stil te bly, and how to pay attention. Dit is nou my taak om hierdie soort goed in hulle te drill. Jy moet onthou dit is nie wat jy sê nie, dit is hoe jy dit sê. Ek weet as ek vir Christopher reprimand, dan is ek baie streng; my gesig en my stem wys dit. Die kinders weet as my oë groot gaan en my stem kliphard word, dan speel ek nie speletjies nie. Ek is baie, baie, baie streng when it comes to discipline. As ek advies moet gee vir enige onderwyser, sal ek vir hulle sê dat hulle hul kinders baie goed moet ken. If you know them inside out and outside in, sal jy altyd weet wie geraas maak, wie sal vergeet om hulle name op hulle take te skryf [she laughs], en wie ‘n bietjie ekstra help nodig het. Jy moet nie worry nie. Die soort goed kom met experience; jy sal dit gou optel”.

“Discipline is iets wat almal van ons hier by Whaleside mee sukkel. Die kinders is nie meer bang vir die prinsipaal nie, so as ek sê, ‘Ek gaan jou kantoor toe stuur’ kyk die kinders net vir my en ek weet hulle dink, ‘What’s the big deal?’ This is what I usually do if there is a discipline problem. Ek hou eers ‘n vra uit sessie met kind en ouers oor huislike omstandighede, of ek lees in handboeke en probeer om handleidings te kry wat sal help”.

6.4.2 Rewarding positive behaviour

Mrs. Sea's learners thrive on the attention and praise that she bestows upon them. She uses coloured stickers, which she pastes in their workbooks if their work is neat or if they have successfully completed a task. Mrs. Sea is a great believer in revising work regularly, “Die werk gaan in by die een oor en dan uit by die ander; dit is hoekom ek elke dag probeer om weer oor die werk te gaan. Ek doen dit vinnig, vinnig, chop, chop, dan is dit klaar”. The following observation highlights this salient point.

The learners are seated on the mat whilst Mrs. Sea randomly asks each learner a question relating to work previously completed. This is an arduous task with 40 plus learners, but it is fast-paced and fun instead of confrontational. Mrs. Sea explains, “Som kinders kry moeilike vrae, want hulle kan cope, terwyl ander makliker vrae kry, want hulle sukkel met die werk”. Once Mrs. Sea has completed the task, she instructs the learners to stand and applaud themselves. There is quite a bit of hustle and bustle as the learners stand. The ovation is loud and lasts for quite some time. Mrs. Sea states, “So moet ek elke dag begin, sodat die kinders goed oor hulself voel en die dag gelukkig begin”.

Test day is quite an event in Mrs. Sea's class. Learners who have achieved an 'A' aggregate are called to the front of the class. Mrs. Sea shakes each learner's hand, looks him/her in the face, and praises him/her, "Veels geluk, baie goed, briljant, my bokkie, my engel". The learners' faces shine with pride, and the class erupts in applause. Later, during an interview session, Mrs. Sea explains, "It is not good enough to just say, 'Baie goed'; jy moet hulle in hulle oë kyk sodat hulle weet that you mean what you are saying. Hierdie kinders moet weet ek gee om en date k trots is op hulle". The school also hosts an awards evening at the end of each term. Learners receive certificates for sports achievement, neatness, good behaviour, and for 'most improved learner'. Mrs. Sea says, "Teachers feel that it is important that they, as well as parents, acknowledge and applaud the learners".



The learners, according to Mrs. Sea, all thrive on competition, and she taps into that to obtain the best results out of them. She often divides them into groups and the group which finishes its work first and gets all the work correct wins a packet of sweets. Mrs. Sea then instructs the winning group to stand on their chairs, and the class applauds them. She also encourages those who did not make it to try again. It is quite clear from the above that Mrs. Sea has an excellent rapport with her learners. The following diary entry highlights the type of relationship she has with her learners.

...It is clear from the way in which Mrs. Sea interacts with her learners that there is a close emotional connection. She and her learners are very affectionate towards one another. She treats them as a mother would treat her own children. Mrs. Sea often hugs them, pats them on their shoulders, or rubs their heads in acknowledgement of work well

done. Often a learner will sit on her lap, another will stand and hug her leg, while others will affectionately play with her hair. The way Mrs. Sea interacts with her learners could be her way of compensating for whatever attention and love these learners are not getting at home.

6.4.3 Managing negative behaviour

Dealing with fights, thefts, back chatting and swearing are all part of a day's work for Mrs. Sea. "Die eerste ding wat ek doen met hierdie kinders is, I lay down the law: 'dit is my klaskamer; julle sal na my luister. As julle onbeskof wil wees, gaan uit my klas uit', I tell them, so that they know. You must never let them take control; you must always be in charge of your class. You must know your children inside out and outside in. As Candice en Enver so still sit, weet ek hulle doen iets stout; toe sê ek net, 'Ek het oë agter my kop; ek kan sien wat jy doen'. Meeste van die tyd doen die kinders niks, maar hulle sal twee keer dink om iets stout te doen, want hulle weet juffrou sien alles".



"Jy moet weet, juffrou, they're a new generation of children, geen respect, onbeskof, vloek, en baklei. Waar leer hulle hierdie goed? By die huis, by mammie en pappie, wat geen respect vir mekaar het nie en wat vloek en baklei met mekaar. Hulle leer nie dissipline tuis nie. Kinders word groot gemaak deur oumas, tantes, of bure, of daar is soms te veel mense wat in een huis woon. Kinders soos Ashley, Enver, Christopher, Allan, en Jackson – voel ek jammer voor. As ek nie streng met hulle is nie, dan is hulle een van die dae die nuwe gangsters in Whaleside. Hulle begin nou al". The following diary entry alludes to this.

...The boys are always the first to scramble out when the bell goes. I peeped through the window and watched as the following unfolded. In order to get to the playground, all the

Grade 3's must walk down a passage. All the Grade 3 boys fight with each other to gain territory of this passage. The class who stays in the fight longest gets control of the passage and the status of being the winners. We are not talking play fighting – a box in the stomach, a kick in the leg, a smack in the face are all part of this ritual.

“Die kinders weet, ‘no swearing and no fighting, ons moet mekaar respek en help. No lying, no stealing, want God hou nie van kinders wat lieg of steel nie’. The children are often mean to one another, tease and mock one another. Dikwels stop ek ‘n les as hulle vir Melanie en Stephen terg. Ek ê vir hulle, ‘Ons moet mekaar respek; julle maak Melanie en Stephen se harte baie seer’. Toe sorg ek dat dié persone vir Melanie en Stephen voor die hele klas om verskoning vra. Hulle moet leer wat is reg en wat is verkeerd”. Mrs. Sea explained that she felt that it was very important that the learners were exposed to values and moral attitudes, as stated in the Bible. “Ek sal altyd van respek en goeie maniere praat soos ek vandag gedoen het”. At the time, I wrote the following in my diary.



...Today, for the first time, I saw a side of Mrs. Sea that even I am scared of. Mrs. Sea came to class late after interval, as she was on duty. The learners all lined up outside the class waiting for her. When she eventually arrived, she opened the door, but did not instruct the learners to enter; instead, she came outside with a cane She looked livid, her eyes were bulging, and she screamed at the top of her lungs, “Wie het die brood so op die vloer gemors? As daardie persone nie nou voorentoe kom nie, gaan die hele klas ‘n pak kry”.

I quickly sneaked into the classroom to see what all the fuss was about. Bits of bread had been thrown around in the front of the class. It was not a pleasant sight, considering that many of these learners often go to bed at night without food. I walked back outside and watched the learners as they exchanged glances with each other, some nudging their friends to move forward. Mrs. Sea’s body language oozed anger. After what seemed like an eternity, Christopher, Deon, and Enver shuffled to the front of the line, Christopher shouting, ‘Dit was ook Jason’. Mrs. Sea just gave Jason one look and he ran forward. Mrs. Sea and the boys entered the classroom, and she then closed the door. The rest of the class started laughing, ‘Ooh, hulle gaan nou lekker pak kry’. Some tried to listen to what was going on inside while others tried to peep through the keyhole. The classroom

door opened, the learners rushed inside, each looking for the culprits who were busy cleaning the mess whilst wiping away their tears.

“Reg, sit! Ek wil vir julle iets vertel. As julle so met kos mors, gaan God vir julle straf; hy gaan vir julle in die vuur in goei en julle sal daar brand”. When Mrs. Sea said these frightful words, she spoke slowly and clearly, pausing now and then so that the learners understood the seriousness of what she was saying. A long silence followed; then, “Haal uit julle boeke; nou gaan ons werk”. I thought, ‘back to school work’.

Mrs. Sea deals with each learner differently. She is strict and stern with those who are disruptive, yet affectionate, patient, and understanding with those who are sitting quietly and staring into space. “Kinders soos Jackson, Allan, en Ashley, ek weet I must show them that I am the boss [she raises her voice]. As hulle eers begin om die anders te bully, skryf ek hulle name op die blaaie by die deur. Hulle weet as hulle name op die deur is, gaan hulle ‘n lekker pak kry”.



“Daar was dae toe Christopher nou net uit die hand geraak het. Hy het een maal vir Francis in sy gesig gespoeg en hom in sy maag geskop, net omdat Francis geweier het om sy khokies vir hom te gee. Ek het hom onmiddelik kantoor toe gestuur en ons het ‘n brief na sy ma toe gestuur. Ek het ook vir hom ‘n lekker pak gegee op sy agterplaas, maar nie voor al die kinders nie. O nee, ek sal dit nie aan my kinders doen nie. Ek glo nie in corporal punishment nie, maar Christopher kry my onder”.

“Die kinders weet, as ek een ding haat, is dit slordigheid. Linda, Helen, en Terry het een pouse besluit om in mekaar se melk te spoeg. Ek het al drie een ruk gegee [she demonstrates with her hands]. Hulle het so groot geskrik, en Terry het sommer begin huil. Hulle sal dit nooit weer doen nie”. From the above two quotes, it becomes apparent that

Mrs. Sea relates differently to the girls than to the boys. The following diary entry highlights this point.

...After months at the school, I pick up subtle differences in the way Mrs. Sea interacts with her learners. She is more inclined to be affectionate with the girls. She also punishes them differently. These gender stereotypes are typical of the community of Whaleside.

“Kinders sal maar kinders wees. Somtyds hardloop hulle rond, spring oor die stoele, en spring op mekaar. Ek sê net, ‘Een, twee, drie’, dan weet die woelige klomp hulle moet nou bedaar. Linda se tantrum en die gevloekery kan ek nie verdra nie. Ek het al ‘n les hieroor gegee. Vir almal gesê dat die Here baie kwaad word as ons lelik met mekaar praat. Nou, as Linda vloek, stuur ek vir haar uit die klas uit, maar as dit erg raak, slaan ek vir haar op haar hande”.



“I don’t allow gangsterlike behaviour in my class, o nee! Hulle weet as hulle met hulle nonsense begin, sal ek vir hulle in die hoek plaas”. Mrs. Sea believes that a lack of positive role models and the escalating violence in the community encourages this form of behaviour.

6.4.4 Academic development strategies

Mrs. Sea starts the day with a Bible lesson. She proudly explains how she draws in other learning areas, such as numeracy and literacy, into her Bible lesson. “Ons tel hoeveel profete daar is en ons skryf nuwe woorde op die bord. OBE sê mos jy moet nie net life skills teach nie, jy moet ook ‘n bietjie maths en tale in werk. Ek laat die kinders self die

nuwe woorde op die bord skryf; hulle voel so groot as hulle self op die bord skryf, en op so ‘n manier, leer die kinders van mekaar”.

“Ek hou daarvan om elke oggend met ‘n storie uit die Bybel te begin. So, weet ek dat die Here na my en die kinders sal kyk en vir my die krag sal gee om te cope. Die Whaleside gemeenskap is baie kerklik. Die kinders gaan gereeld Bybelklas toe en geniet elke oggend se storie. I choose stories that teach us not to cheat, steal, or lie. Die kinders weet dat hierdie soort goed in hulle huis en gemeenskap afgang. Hulle moet weet dat dit verkeerd is en dat God vir daardie mense sal straf”.

Mrs. Sea only teaches new work after interval. “In die oggend, sukkel hierdie kinders om te konsentreer; hulle breine kan net werk na dat hulle iets geëet het. Daar is ook daardie stoute paartjies, soos Christopher en Jackson, wat baie keer lag-lag by die skool aankom eers gedurende pouse. Every interval, Mrs. Sea ensures that Deon, Charelle, and Thomas get four slices of bread as they often go to bed at night without supper. Their parents are all on welfare and barely make ends meet.

For this particular lesson, all the learners are seated on the mat. Mrs. Sea explains the work, does a few of the sums on the board, gets the learners to complete some of the calculations on the board, encourages questions, and applauds their correct answers. She then gets a learner to hand out an exercise to the class, while she works with a few learners who have remained on the mat. The learners seem accustomed to this as they go to their desks and start with the task given to them. The group of learners Mrs. Sea is

busy working with are those learners who need additional support with their mathematics. Mrs. Sea sits flat on the mat with them as she explains the work again, much slower this time and constantly referring to examples. She praises the learners often and encourages them to assist each other. Even though they no longer use the abacus in grade 3, Mrs. Sea encourages those who are struggling to make use of it. Mrs. Sea sits with each learner, marks their work, answers their questions patiently, and showers them with praise for every correct step they take.

Once the group is seated on the floor, is settled and working, Mrs. Sea walks around the class and marks the learners' work. She listens attentively to all the complaints the learners have: 'Abigail het van my afgekyk', 'Luallen het vir my geskop', 'Juffrou, ek wil toilet toe gaan'. Mrs. Sea signs their work and reminds the learners to check which level they have attained for the task. The learners then, as if on cue, sing '5, 4, 3 - juffrou sê my werk is goed; 3, 2, 1 - juffrou is bekommered oor my werk'. During one of our discussions, Mrs. Sea explains that because OBE educators now use levels that reflect the learners' progress, she felt it was important that they, the learners, were aware of this, and this also encouraged the learner to work harder.

Mrs. Sea has learnt through the years that the learners work best when she incorporates lots of toys, games, and pictures into classes. For one particular lesson on transportation, Mrs. Sea bought toy buses, cars, trucks, motor bikes, trains, and fire engines. A photograph of the toys Mrs. Sea used in this lesson is included in Appendix 7. Mrs. Sea felt that the toys stimulated discussion and helped her introduce new vocabulary. This

particularly helps those learners who struggle with their vocabulary, as they are now able to visualise the toy in their mind. This also encourages those learners who are shy to participate in class discussions.

...My favourite part of the day is undoubtedly 'Sing saam tyd'. The learners recite poems, songs, and hymns. The learners sing with such vooma and they act out each sequence of the song. Often many of them stop singing as they are too engrossed in the actions. There are one or two sections of the song where the pitch is very high; this part the learners sing at the top of their lungs. Oh dear! so out of tune, but too cute.

The diary extract above illustrates that Mrs. Sea consciously encourages the learners to sing and act; she feels they must learn how to project their voices, feelings, and opinions. Singing also makes them feel good about themselves and it builds their confidence. Mrs. Sea also uses movement and song as a means to assist learners. She devised the following strategies to assist those learners who are struggling with their mathematics:



While hitting on your leg count in two's to the beat.
Watter nommer het ek uitgelaat 2, 4, _, 8, 10? Nou skryf die nommer op jou liggaam.
Kom ons tel in tiene; klap jou hande as ons tel.

In many cases, Mrs. Sea has to first revise grade 2 work before she can continue with grade 3 work. Some learners still battle with their multiplication tables. She instructs the learners to say their multiplication tables over and over, and to break the monotony, she turns it into a competition: the first learner who gets their two-times tables correct, wins a chocolate.

Mrs. Sea has found that the best way to help those learners with problems in mathematics and languages is by letting them play 'shop shop'. In one corner of the class, Mrs. Sea has set up a make-believe 'spaza shop'. Each learner gets monopoly money. The learners are instructed to buy their own groceries; they have to calculate the total of their groceries and how much change they must get.

Mrs. Sea's lessons are often related to what happens in the world around them. While doing the lesson on transport, Mrs. Sea discusses rules of the road with the learners, and she stimulates discussion by asking the learners how they travel to the shopping market. The learners eagerly explain to her how they travel by taxi and bus and relate stories of incidents that took place en route to the shopping market. Mrs. Sea feels that this information serves as the foundation for new work which assesses their ability to give directions and recognise the rules of the road.



6.4.5 Social and emotional support strategies

It is clear from Mrs. Sea's interactions with the learners that she not only presents her learners with knowledge, but also exposes them to values, skills, and attitudes. The following texts illustrate efforts made by Mrs. Sea with regards to healthcare, social skills development, and psychological support.

Mrs. Sea often speaks about how she copes with the harsh realities of neglect, abuse, pornography, and alcoholism that take place within the Whaleside community. The following diary extract gives insight into this.

...Mrs. Sea explained today that the issue of her learners' health only hit home a few years ago after she attended a workshop at their school clinic. She said that the speaker made her realise that in this day and age people still did not talk about TB and AIDS. She believed that the workshop helped her change her approach to healthcare. She now plays a more active role in educating the learners and educators with regards to TB, AIDS, and cholera. Mrs. Sea believes that educating the learners is the first step in fighting this disease.

Mrs. Sea has implemented her ideology by educating her learners about a particular illness every month. Together, she and the learners design information posters for the class. A photograph of posters on HIV/Aids that Mrs. Sea put up on the board in her classroom can be found in Appendix 7. She is presently teaching the class about cholera, which recently made headline news. The foundation phase educators have implemented a 'buddy system'. Whenever a learner is seriously ill, his/her buddy, usually a neighbour or family member, collects worksheets or tasks and drops them at the learner's home. In this way, the learner does not miss out on work done at school. Mrs. Sea believes that as a community school, Whaleside has a responsibility to not only educate the learners with regards to TB and AIDS, but also to support those who are living with TB and AIDS.

Mrs. Sea repeatedly reminds me that these children are a new generation of children who have no respect for older people, who are rude and just not interested in school. She uses the Bible as her starting point when it comes to educating the learners. She says, "Ek sal vir hulle elke dag remind that you must greet, you must say thank you, you must sit and eat, and you must wash your hands before you eat". Mrs. Sea herself models these gestures and mannerisms: she too sits and eats and she apologises when she arrives late to the class. Mrs. Sea explains, "Hulle mummies en pappies praat lelik en gaan tekere in die

huis. Die kinders let op en copy wat hulle ouers doen. Ek sukkel met hulle om ‘Dankie’, ‘Ekskuus’, en ‘Goeie more’ te sê, want hulle ouers doen dit nie. I insist that they sit and eat; ek haat dit as die klok lui en hulle storm uit die klas met ‘n mond vol brood. They stuff their mouths, hardloop rond, en eet en praat skoons met hulle mond vol kos’. The following instances illustrate how Mrs. Sea puts the above etiquette into place.

Mrs. Sea walks to the learner, touches him or her lightly on the shoulder, and whispers, “Maak toe jou mond as jy eet”.

“Jason, vra mooi as jy Francis se potlood wil leen. Sê nou agter my, ‘mag ek asseblief jou potlood leen?’”

“Candice, gaan haal nou eers ‘n tissue van juffrou se tafel. Onthou, meisies hou altyd vir hulle self netjies”.

“Wat moet ons sê as juffrou die brood uitdeel? Ons sê ‘dankie juffrou’”.

Mrs. Sea emphasises that she wants the learners to take pride in their belongings and in themselves. While Mrs. Sea is teaching, she casually walks up to a learner and helps him/her tuck in his/her shirt, or while she is marking the learners’ books, she will straighten a child’s tie. “Ek sê altyd vir hulle, ‘maak eers julle tafel mooi voor julle op die mat kom sit’. I also praise them when their books are neat and encourage them to take pride in their work”.

On one occasion, I witnessed Mrs. Sea comforting a learner from her class whose father had recently passed away. She sat flat down on the mat with the learners in a semi-circle around her. She whispered as she spoke, her facial expression solemn and sad. The language she used was very simple as she explained to the learners what happens when a person dies. Mrs. Sea said a prayer for the learner’s father and then encouraged all the learners to talk about a loved one whom they had lost.

Mrs. Sea interacts with the learners in a loving and caring manner. She enjoys calling them 'liefie' or 'my bokkie'. As she makes her way around the classroom from one table to another, she pats them on the shoulder when they are progressing well, or rubs their heads. She says, "Baie goed, dit is mooi", or she puts her arm around the learner who is standing waiting to talk to her.

Mrs. Sea, in her own unique style, has threaded these values, skills, and attitudes into her daily routine with her learners. She hopes that with lots of love, attention, and affection, these learners will grow up to be good Christian people. That is all that she wishes for them.




6.5 Sources of support for Mrs. Sea beyond the classroom

It is obvious that Mrs. Sea draws on all the available support at her disposal when assisting learners with special needs. The following paragraphs specify these support structures in some detail.

The Whaleside Governing Body and Teacher Support Team (TST) are recent initiatives at the school. Subsidies from the Department of Education facilitate a feeding scheme and the school has access to occupational therapy trainees who are based at Whaleside and are supported by a group of volunteers, mostly parents and ex-students. The school also liaises regularly with the school clinic, school nurse, and social worker.


In theory, these structures should work together and meet regularly. Unfortunately, this is not the case as yet. The occupational therapist, social worker, school nurse, and psychologist are often not available, leaving the educators with little or no choice but to make their own deductions.

The Governing Body is only in its second term of operation. Both parents and educators elect members. Mrs. Sea explains that “they are expected to visit the classrooms, not to intrude, but to ask about the well-being of the teacher and to discuss the discipline of the children, as well as any other problems. Problem cases are taken up in a meeting and the learner’s parents are called in to discuss strategies to improve the learner’s behaviour. Members also help with fundraising and  supervising the classes of those teachers who are attending workshops.

Mrs. Sea’s understanding of a Teacher Support Team (TST) is that “it is a system that is needed as proof that a learner should repeat a year or be included in another educational institution according to his or her learning abilities”. The TST is made up of one educator per grade, the school psychologist, and members of the Whaleside School Clinic. Educators are expected to fill out a form documenting problems that a learner might be experiencing. The TST then discusses these problems. Mrs. Sea says, “Sometimes a verbal conversation is required to estimate the details of the problem. Sometimes a small test is done to indicate the level of progress in certain learning areas of the pupil’s school programme. These tests, for example, spelling and mathematics tests, are then discussed

by the TST who, together with the educator involved, thinks of and discusses strategies to assist the pupil.

Those grade 1 and grade 2 learners with perceptual and hand-eye co-ordination difficulties are referred to the occupational therapy trainees. Specific health and learning problems are referred to the school nurse and school clinic. Whaleside Primary is one of a number of schools that the Whaleside School Clinic services, resulting in long waiting lists. The school nurse, Mrs. Brummer, regularly visits the school to follow up on those learners who are diagnosed with TB and to address the concerns that educators have with regard to the general health of the learners.

In conclusion, Mrs. Sea believes that the  forms of support discussed above can work, but they lack the involvement of key role players like the parents and community leaders. Every group works on its own; they should come together and see how they can support each other. She feels strongly that the government must train all educators to be able to cope with the heavy social and emotional problems that learners are faced with daily.

This chapter looked at the barriers to learning apparent in Mrs. Sea's classroom and the strategies she uses to assist these learners. Chapter 7 discusses key issues that have emerged from the picture of the school and classroom, as sketched in Chapter 5 and 6, and draws some tentative conclusions.

Chapter 7

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to interpret what happens in Mrs. Sea's class in the light of the literature on inclusion. Again, reference should be made to Wolcott (1994:12) who argues that qualitative inquiry asks the question, "What is going on here?". Chapters 5 and 6 present descriptions of the school, educator, and learners in order to provide a sense of what is going on in terms of inclusion. From this, tentative interpretations will be made and recommendations put forward.



7.2 Setting: community, school and classroom

Extensive literature exists describing what inclusive education settings should look like. This literature is detailed in Chapter 2. The following descriptions are noteworthy as they apply to Whaleside Primary. An analysis of the data revealed that Mrs. Sea's classroom can be described as an inclusive classroom because it has the following in place:

- All learners are welcome to attend the school
- Mrs. Sea supports inclusive education
- Positive attitudes towards learners with disabilities exist
- Staff are undergoing staff development training
- Curriculum development is taking place.

Ainscow (1997); Giangreggo (1997); and Rose (2000) highlighted these elements, and more as important in developing inclusive schools. These salient points will now be discussed in greater detail. A closer analysis of the data highlight an almost ‘forced inclusion’. Whaleside Primary was not a school that went through a process and then decided to embrace the philosophy of inclusion. It was a school that had for years unknowingly accepted learners with varied barriers to learning. I feel that it is important to note that once the staff was educated about inclusion, many acknowledged that the school had for years unknowingly been accepting learners with special needs. There was now a further understanding that learners experiencing barriers to learning required something different. This is similar to what Lomofsky et al (1999b:71) says: “Teachers in mainstream classrooms will be and in many cases already are accommodating learners with a diverse range of needs”. This research took its starting point from the premise that there are learners experiencing barriers to learning who are not accommodated in their classes. Mrs. Sea identified 26 learners who are experiencing some barrier to learning; therefore, this research also documented the extent to which there are learners experiencing barriers to learning in the mainstream. This is consistent with the data presented by Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker, & Engelbrecht (1999). They point out that learners experiencing barriers to learning make up approximately 40% of the South African school population.

The implementation of Outcomes Based Education has brought about many positive changes at Whaleside Primary. Staff development and training with regards to curriculum implementation are practices that the school has established, and these practices are likely

to make attention to learning barriers easier. It appears that there is a genuine collective vision for the school, but teamwork with regards to addressing the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning is not yet in place.

The data revealed that although Mrs. Sea's classroom can in some instances be described as an inclusive class, it does lack certain elements which are also regarded in the literature as important for inclusion (Department of Education, 1997). The following points allude to this:

- A lack of parental involvement
- Absence of community support
- Inadequate facilities.



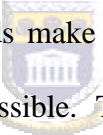
Eloff, Engelbrecht, and Swart (2000) produced similar findings in their research. They identified similar stressors that mainstream teachers experienced in trying to accommodate learners with disabilities.

Parental involvement is something that is severely lacking at Whaleside Primary. Chapter 5 shows that for some of these parents, Whaleside Primary represents a safe haven for their children, while for others, the feeding scheme is a guarantee that their child will at least eat one meal every day. For these parents, policy, educational, or curriculum development are not the kind of factors they consider before sending their child to school; their children's physical well-being is their first priority.

Although Whaleside is in need of much support, the school itself does a lot for the community. This I pointed out in Chapter 5. The school raises funds for the elderly and poor, sports clubs use the school field as a venue to play matches, and the schools gospel and drama group regularly visits the poor. I regard this as a step towards better collaboration between the school and the community. This is consistent with what Farrell (2001) says: that inclusive practices also dictate that the school must become an integral part of the community. I think the answer lies in getting all learners involved in this and highlighting the skills and attitudes that they will develop by participating in activities relating to the broader community; but by the same token, the community needs to rally together in support of Whaleside Primary.

The community's possible naivety and lack of information with regards to barriers to learning make the process towards inclusion at Whaleside more difficult. Chapter 5 highlighted many of the perceptions that some of the parents have with regard to barriers to learning. They are summarised as follows. This is a community that believes that barriers to learning emerge as a result of bad teaching on the part of the educators. For many, barriers to learning do not exist. The problem, as they see it, is bad behaviour. This they feel can be solved by a good hiding or a smack. Additionally, the lack of community and family support, financial constraints, and long waiting lists at school clinics all make assisting the learners very difficult. There is much literature and research that highlights the importance of parent and community support (Department of Education, 2000; Muthukrishna, Farman, & Sader, 2000). From this, I concluded that the mindset of

parents with regards to the ongoing development of their children *does* impact on the school's ability to embrace inclusion.

The actual physical setting of the school and classrooms is not entirely conducive to teaching. Chapter 5 paints a portrait of a school in need of repair and lacking in resources and personnel. The literature does make mention that “in order to redress the previous educational disadvantage, instructional and environmental modifications must be made to accommodate the needs of all children” (Engelbrecht, Naicker, & Engelbrecht, 1998:100). I will go so far as to say that in addition to the above, structural modifications to the school and classrooms must also be made. Whaleside Primary has no wheelchair ramps, the bad lighting in many of the classrooms would be problematic for learners with visual impairment, and insufficient funds  make purchasing equipment to assist learners with physical disabilities almost impossible. This description of Whaleside Primary indicates that the structural shortcomings of the school do not facilitate the notion of inclusion.

After my time at the school, I am left with the following questions:

Is Mrs. Sea justified in saying that she has been assisting learners experiencing barriers to learning when all she has done, at most, is *attempt* to help these learners and has often failed?

To what extent can Mrs. Sea's classroom be described as an inclusive classroom?

Can an inclusive school exist in this community?

7.3. Learners' context

Many of the learners come from the immediate area, Ashford. There are also quite a few who come from townships and a few who come from a nearby middle-class area. Thus, the class population was made up of varied cultures. Observations of these learners show that they interacted primarily as children and not as individuals who come from different cultures. Therefore, I would say that this is a class that is representative of the new South Africa. The family unit in this community is distinctly different from the norm (this will be discussed later). These learners do not come from a traditional family home. Their classmates and Mrs. Sea is their family. This class looks like a family made up of children from different cultures and religions. The environment and atmosphere that Mrs. Sea has created and her interactions with the learners as a family seem to enhance acceptance of diversity. Lewis (1996), in his research, found that children in inclusive classrooms demonstrated increased acceptance and appreciation of diversity.

The learners in Mrs. Sea's class are indeed a representation of a new generation of children living in the early 21st century in South Africa. These are nine and ten year olds who are not sheltered from the atrocities of society. They live it every day. These are children who know quite a bit about drugs, sex, alcohol, abuse, and violence. They are exposed to it in their homes, their community, and the media. The data shows that many of the learners are sexually aware and very curious about their sexuality. Mrs. Sea's suspicions of possible child abuse are just that: suspicions. No parental support, conflicting stories, and insufficient information leave Mrs. Sea with only her suspicions.

The family units of the children in this class are very different from the norm and reflect the change within the community and society at large. In the absence of their parents, many of these learners are raised by their aunts, grandparents, or even siblings. This comes across clearly in Chapter 6. Many of these learners' parents work in factories, so they leave early and return home quite late in the evenings. Their grandparents, aunts, or siblings cook for them, take them to school, and even help with homework. For a few, however, this is unfortunately not the case. Without parental supervision, the child is left to his/her own devices. They do not do their homework, come and go as they please, and are lacking in discipline and a sense of family because their friends have become their family. In such cases, the grandparents are too old and aunts and siblings too busy with their own lives to take care of the learner.



In the previous section I alluded to the following

- new generation of children
- family unit different
- changing society

The point is this; these factors can lead to barriers to learning or further negatively impact on learners experiencing barriers to learning. We must though be cognisant of the fact that these children's living conditions could possibly be a by product of the Apartheid system. The pass laws, labour laws, separate development, Bantu education (Meerkotter, 1998) and a myriad of other laws had a definitive impact on society and the present inequalities with respect to living conditions is indicative of our tragic history.

What is clear from the above discussion is that the learners' background and community impacted on their educational development. It is as if the school is in a constant battle against elements within the community (violence, drugs, and abuse), which plays itself out in the classroom. In response to the growing concerns about HIV/Aids, drugs, and child abuse, the school has arranged life skills programmes, which address these issues. This proactive approach is good, but what are not clearly in place are steps and procedures to address and cope with learners who are possibly abused. This shows that Whaleside Primary is still in the process of putting in place some form of support. The role and duties of support services are documented by many (Lazarus & Donald, 1994; Engelbrecht, Naicker, & Englebrecht, 1998; & Engelbrecht, Kriegler, & Booysen, 1996).



At this point, I would like to pick up on the whole notion of 'forced inclusion', as discussed earlier. From the text, it is apparent that circumstances dictate that Whaleside Primary has become an inclusive school, of sorts. The school does not encourage learners experiencing barriers to learning to attend. Educators have little choice, but to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning, and educator training and staff development were initiatives from the Department of Education and not from the school per se. This seems an almost unfair analysis of the school. This school exists and must function in a particular context. As described earlier, Whaleside Primary represents a safe haven for children and a place where they are educated and fed. I would almost think that inclusion as described in the literature (Department of Education, 2001) should be a long-term goal, because as the data indicates, this school has more pressing issues to attend to.

If many schools are like Whaleside Primary, should a first step towards inclusion not be to create equal facilities for all schools? If schools are like Whaleside Primary, is inclusion at all feasible?

7.4 Learners experiencing barriers to learning

7.4.1 Intrinsic, extrinsic and interactive barriers to learning

Mrs. Sea's classroom is a good illustration of the range of barriers to learning described in White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001).

Intrinsic barriers to learning are common phenomena in Mrs. Sea's classroom. Many of the learners suffer from asthma, tuberculosis, flu, and diarrhoea, as illustrated in Chapters 5 and 6. It is interesting to note that although these ailments are common in young children, there is a growing concern with regard to their association with the HIV/Aids epidemic. At Whaleside Primary, this seems to be a topic shrouded in secrecy. Although legislation exists with regard to disclosure, one has to question its validity with regard to children at school, particularly young children, as is the case at Whaleside Primary. Does this law not put the educator and learners at risk? Mrs. Sea's lack of information with regard to HIV/Aids and the laws and policy governing it, puts her and all the other learners at risk. Initially, I was alarmed and judged Mrs. Sea harshly when she explained that she had to sometimes guess who may be HIV positive. In this instance, Mrs. Sea puts herself first. I cannot blame Mrs. Sea, and I must add that I do admire her for being thorough and looking at all the factors before drawing conclusions.

A high proportion of extrinsically generated barriers to learning are prevalent in Mrs. Sea's classroom. The literature of Thejane and Muthikrishna, (2000), Gwala-Ogisi, (1990), Donald, (1993), Department of Education, (2002) and McNamara and Moreton, (2001) recognise how external factors can contribute negatively to a learners education.

At Whaleside Primary, you cannot ignore the influence that the community has on these learners. Gang violence was often the topic of many classroom discussions in Mrs. Sea's classroom. Most of the male learners are mesmerised by the gangsters and gang violence. The fact that they know many of these gangsters feeds into their fantasy. Therefore, it is not surprising that many of the boys' barriers to learning translate themselves into bad behaviour. They display aggressive behaviour and are always fighting. Chapters 5 and 6 illustrate many incidences of aggression and unruly behaviour. What is interesting is that although Mrs. Sea discusses these issues with them and often points out that violence, killing, and drugs are bad, these learners will return to school every day with a renewed sense of admiration and awe for the gangsters. This could possibly be due to their immaturity. They are after all, only in Grade 3. One could even assume that it is because they come from a culture where fighting is, by and large, accepted, or they could be reflecting what takes place in their homes. Once again, Mrs. Sea is fighting a losing battle. It seems as if the learners go home every day and unlearn the values and attitudes that she has taught them. What can an educator do in this case, when clearly the values that she tries to share with the learners are not the same as those of the families or community? Should the Department of Education devise a common set of values and attitudes for all, which educators should then teach? Is it possible that Mrs. Sea is going

about this the wrong way? Is there a way to teach positive values and attitudes to these learners?

A number of parents are alcoholics and thus unable to care properly for their children. It is comforting to see Mrs. Sea helping these learners. It often looks as if she is raising them herself. It seems as if Mrs. Sea does not know what to do in these situations. I get the impression that she sees them as her responsibility and will make every effort to assist them. Mrs. Sea gives so much of herself to these learners. They are her first priority. However, by not addressing the basic problem, that is, the parents, Mrs. Sea is not helping these learners. Her justification is that something is better than nothing. I disagree. Mrs. Sea's need to do something to help the learners is doing more harm than good, I feel. Again, we find this vicious cycle perpetuating itself. The parents cannot care for their children, and Mrs. Sea now plays teacher and mother. Is it even possible that the parents see this and that Mrs. Sea is blind to their lack of interest? What could Mrs. Sea do about these parents? This is not an easy matter for any educator; it is almost as if the more committed and caring Mrs. Sea becomes, the worse off she becomes. How far does the educator's responsibility extend? What happens next year? What if these children are in a class where the educator is not as caring? What would constitute real assistance for some of these learners?

What is evident from descriptions of the learners in Chapter 6 is that there is a complexity in their barriers to learning. Barriers to learning are difficult to identify and many are compounded by other factors. Learners at Whaleside Primary do not only have intrinsic

or only extrinsic barriers to learning; some of them have both. The actual problem that needs to be addressed becomes part of a number of problems that the learner is experiencing.

This brings us to interactive special needs. This term describes an interaction of various factors which result in barriers to learning. The following descriptions fall into this category. Although many of the issues discussed in this section can also be described as extrinsic barriers to learning, the following are described as interactive special needs in so far as a number of barriers were evident in the learner, which resulted in an educational barrier to learning.

Poverty seems to be a compounding factor in the lives of these learners and plays itself out in various forms. Many of these learners live below the poverty line. They are therefore malnourished and some suffer from tuberculosis due to their living conditions. These learners' ill health results in increased absenteeism and, in some instances, a delay in their physical development. Here, poverty is the source of the problem, which, in turn, results in malnutrition or tuberculosis. On closer analysis, you will find that it does not stop there. The source of the problem has a snowball effect. Poverty leads to malnutrition, which leads to a delay in development, which results in a learning problem, which plays itself out as a behavioural problem in the classroom. Mrs. Sea addresses the problem before her: the behavioural problem. She is fighting a losing battle it seems, because the source of the problem is beyond her control. Whose responsibility is it to address and

solve these problems? These situations are typical of many of the cases in Mrs. Sea's classroom and are highlighted in the next section.

This also indicates that a direct correlation exists between poverty and the existence of barriers to learning. It is clear that an impoverished background impacts on the learner's physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development. This is in line with the literature, which acknowledges the existence of extrinsic factors which could lead to special needs (Department of Education, 1995; 2001).

Many of these learners come from single-parent homes. This is very common in the community. This is often a result of divorce, death, or separation. In this class, there is a high incidence of parent deaths. Cancer and gang-related deaths account for a few of the deaths. These young learners are subjected to issues of loss and emotional turmoil, which play themselves out in the class. These learners often display inappropriate behaviour, regress in terms of their emotional development, and struggle academically as result of what they are experiencing. Mrs. Sea acknowledges that she copes better with problems of this nature. They are easy to identify and the learners respond well to the extra love and attention that she showers on them. Mrs. Sea can support and enhance their academic progress. Mrs. Sea does well to address problems of this nature. They are easily identifiable, manageable, and the problem is short-term; thus, she can see progress and obtains closure.

The barriers to learning identified here are similar to those identified by Swart and Pettipher (2000). In their research, they pointed out similar barriers identified by teachers in their classrooms.

7.5 Mrs. Sea as an inclusive educator

The global development from special education to inclusive education can be equated with the educational journey of Mrs. Sea. In her early years as an educator, she only recognised academic barriers to learning. Her longstanding, keen interest in studying remedial work highlights the notion that she possibly still sees special education and general education as separate.



Twenty years hence, her thoughts on special education are very different. Her teaching, particularly at Whaleside Primary, has opened her eyes to the fact that factors within the community and society at large can impact on the learner's development. Mrs. Sea now recognises that extrinsic barriers to learning exist and she is aware that there are distinctly more extrinsic barriers to learning.

Mrs. Sea admits that working with learners experiencing barriers to learning is difficult, "Sometimes I'm at my wits end. I feel helpless, maar wat kan ek doen?" In a sincere effort to help those learners experiencing barriers to learning, Mrs. Sea recognises that as an educator, she has limitations and that some of her strategies have not generated results. Mrs. Sea is of the opinion that the fact that she has no formal training in dealing with

learners experiencing barriers to learning makes assisting them an arduous task. Mrs. Sea's feelings reflect the feelings held by many educators. Results from research completed by UNESCO (1986) showed that educators were willing to take on the responsibility for special needs children, but did not think they had the skills and training to carry out the task.

Mrs. Sea's classroom appears to be an isolated unit. This may be due to the old dynamic and perceptions of the head of department (who was regarded as unapproachable). I did not at any time see all the Grade 3 educators collaborating on lessons or sharing information. Mrs. Sea often took the lead in designing lesson plans. She did sometimes give the impression of being something of a loner. Although Mrs. Sea does consult with the teacher support team and the school clinic with regards to learners experiencing barriers to learning, she ultimately addresses barriers to learning by herself. This is not uncommon. Givner and Haager (1995) write that "Traditionally mainstream educators worked in relative isolation within their own classrooms and have been primarily responsible for being the instructional leader and manager in the classroom" (Cited in Engelbrecht, Forlin, Eloff, & Swart, 2001:84). There still seems to be a strong presence of the old perceptions in Mrs. Sea. She sees the role of the head of department as being someone who knows it all and who should not need to ask for help. There is, though, an air of seniority about her; I think she feels she has earned her position but possibly does not know how to maintain her status while, at the same time, facilitating a process of collaboration.

Chapter 3 refers to a number of attitudes and beliefs that inclusive educators should possess. York-Barr, Schultz, Doyle, Kronberg, and Crossett (1996:9) found in their research that people who were involved in an inclusive school, “Had a positive regard for students with disabilities, valued beliefs such as respect, getting along with others and caring and had a sense of self efficacy and worth”. Similarly, Mills (1979) suggests that in order to assist learners with special needs, educators must develop the necessary skills, think positively, know their own strengths and weaknesses, and smile. Mills (1979) goes on to explain that learners with special needs are children too. They need the same warmth as do all children. In many instances, Mrs. Sea reflected some of the behaviours and attitudes described above. Here are a few examples:

“Ek is baie, baie, baie lief vir hulle...”

“Persoonlik weet ek dat ek te geheg aan die kinders is. Ek ken hulle vanaf graad 1. Ek is soos hulle mammië; dit is nie goed vir hulle nie; dit is nie goed vir my nie, because I sometimes get too emotionally involved. Ek baby hulle te veel; hulle het net baie liefde nodig; they don't often get attention at home, veral as mammië en pappië baklei het”.

“...I must tell you, I have sleepless nights worrying about these children, party aande huil ek; ek maak myself sick. My dokter sê vir my dat my hernia al hoe erger word want ek het te veel stress”.

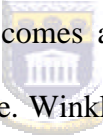
Tranlations can be found on pages 116, 117, 118

These descriptions allude to Mrs. Sea's motherly character. What is amazing is how these learners respond to love, affection, and attention. Mrs. Sea thinks that this is really often all they need. Mrs. Sea's intuitive mothering is very nice, but it does not instil resilience. Mrs. Sea will not always be there for them, to spur them on, hug them, or encourage and praise them. Not all educators are affectionate and loving, even though they may be brilliant educators. What do the children do in this case? Mrs. Sea admits to being too

involved and that this often clouds her judgement. Should teaching become this personalized? Can we teach educators how to be affectionate, caring, and loving? While Mrs. Sea is caring and affectionate, she still remains realistic and cautious. The following highlights this point:

“Ek dink my grootste gevaar is dat ek aangesteek word deur een van die kinders met tuberculosis of AIDS [pause]. Die ouers ê vir ons niks. Wat as ek vir my familie aansteek? Ek moet kop hou. As die kinders voor my hoes, stoot ek vir hulle weg; as hulle val en ek moet die wond skoon maak, gebruik ek surgical gloves. I take no chances because of all the stuff that I have seen here at the school...”

Translations can be found on pages 118

The data show that Mrs. Sea has always tried to assist learners with whatever academic or emotional problems they had. Her actions show that she never overlooked her learners regardless of their backgrounds. What comes across strongly in the data is her deep respect for children and her caring nature.  Winkler (1998) writes that students know that their teachers care when teachers respect them, communicate politely, and listen to them. Mrs. Sea's respect for children and her caring nature can be attributed to her strong religious convictions. The Bible stories that she shares with the learners and the prayers they say together reflect her personal religious convictions. Her religion is clearly integrated into many aspects of her teaching. Below are a few examples:

“God hou my aan die gang. Hy gee vir my die krag om hierdie werk te doen”

Mrs. Sea explained that it was very important that that the learners were exposed to values and attitudes, as stated in the Bible.

“Ek hou daarvan om elke oggend met ‘n storie van die Bybel te begin. So, weet ek dat die Here na my en die kinders sal kyk, en vir my die krag sal gee om te cope”.

Translations can be found on pages 114, 148

Mrs. Sea often comes across as a nurturer, someone who tries to instil positive values, attitudes, and morals. This is in line with the literature of Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996); Westwood (1997), and Richards (1999), who point out that these strategies are effective with learners with emotional and behavioural problems. Mrs. Sea gives value to the lives of these learners, something they often do not get at home. We see this when she says things like:

“Every child can learn and each teacher should find out how the child learns and how the child thinks...”.

“Help vir juffrou asseblief, ek vra mooi”.

“ek sal nie toelaat dat Enver ook `n vrot appel word nie”.

“veels geluk, baie goed, briljant my bokkie, my engel”.

“baie goed, dit is mooi” or puts her arm around the learner who is standing and waiting to talk to her.

Translations can be found on pages 129, 125, 138, 143



..... and does things like

spending many of her Sundays tutoring Deon so that he would not lag behind with his school work

making her way from one table to another, patting them on the shoulder when they are progressing well, or rubbing their heads.

Translations can be found on pages 132, 154

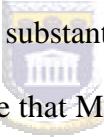
These descriptions form an accurate picture of Mrs. Sea. This, though, is coupled with the reality Mrs. Sea finds herself in. She feels that some of the learners in her class cannot learn. Thus, we have this contradiction between the philosophy of inclusion and what actually takes place in Mrs. Sea`s classroom. Engelbrecht, Eloff, Newmark, and Kachelhoffer`s (1997), research results were similar. They did a study at a school which accommodated children afflicted with Down`s syndrome. They found that the educators and principal interpreted their attitudes towards these learners as positive, because they

loved them. They believed, though, that the children with Down's syndrome would not pass Grade 1 and tended to compare their progress to that of the other learners. Kristensen, Omagor-Loican and Onen, (2003) and Hamilton, (2003) produced similar findings with respect to educators attitudes accommodating learners experiencing barriers to learning

After careful perusal of the literature (Engelbrecht, 1999; Taylor, 1994; and Swart & Pettipher (2001), we can conclude that Mrs. Sea has many of the personality traits of an inclusive educator, but in admitting that some learners in her class cannot learn, she does go against the philosophy of inclusion. This could be because she lacks the knowledge and training to address many of the barriers to learning that these learners are experiencing. I think that Mrs. Sea assumes that all the learners have to learn the same things at the same pace. Mrs. Sea does have some knowledge and experience with regard to accommodating learners with learning barriers, and so do many other educators.

Jorgensen (1997) and Lewis (1996) are of the opinion that an inclusive educator believes in and celebrates diversity. As described earlier, this Grade 3 classroom is a melting pot of cultures. The mixture of Black, White, Indian, Coloured, 7th-Day Adventists, Muslim, and Catholic children illustrates the cultural diversity in the classroom. Even though she does not know it, Mrs. Sea has successfully facilitated acceptance of these different cultures and religions. The previous dispensation succeeded in highlighting and emphasising difference. This classroom, for me, showcases the end of this. Kristensen, Omagor-Loican and Onen, (2003) in their research found that 83% of respondents felt

that diversity among learners could enrich all learners. While at Whaleside Primary, I did not ever see Mrs. Sea organise or discuss issues relating to diversity. I wonder if it is because this is a concept that the Grade 3`s will not grasp because they all just see themselves as little children? It does seem as if Mrs. Sea has created an environment in which diversity is accepted. Diversity is not something Mrs. Sea has consciously addressed in her classroom; it is something that comes across in the way she interacts with the learners. She treats everyone the same. I did not at any time hear anyone make any racist comments or see any of the children say or do anything that was out of character for children.

Jorgensen (1997:4) writes that an inclusive educator must have the belief that “Effective teaching for students with disabilities is  substantively the same as effective teaching for all students”. From the above, we can see that Mrs. Sea not only believes in this, she also models this behaviour.

When working with learners with emotional disabilities, an inclusive educator should establish an open and accepting environment, be tolerant, and use good judgement (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). It was highlighted earlier that Mrs. Sea does accomplish this to a certain extent. There have, however, been occasions where her strong religious morals and values have appeared to clash with some of the beliefs and attitudes that an inclusive educator should have.

- Baie van die onderwysers kan dit sien, sy is net ougat, finish en klaar.
- This is a problem child.

Translations can be found on page 139

These and other instances show her to be not very tolerant of bad behaviour and sometimes even judgemental. It also highlights the internal conflict that Mrs. Sea must surely experience.

What is alarming is that Mrs. Sea does not know enough about legislation and organisations which offer support and guidance in addressing these issues. As alarming as it may sound, I think that this is really indicative of the type of educator that Mrs. Sea is: she is hesitant to ask for help. The naivety of such a person makes her/him vulnerable. In addition, there is no school policy which deals with issues of abuse, drugs, or alcohol to guide Mrs. Sea.



7.6 Mrs. Sea's concerns

Mrs. Sea comes across as a real human being in the classroom, not just a person in a professional role. She has real feelings and valid concerns and reservations. By her own admission, her husband's illness is something that she and her own children have battled to come to terms with. Mrs. Sea has, in a sense, used the school to balance the stress she is experiencing at home. Throwing herself into her schoolwork can possibly be her way of coping with her problems. The HIV/AIDS epidemic and high incidence of tuberculosis disturbs Mrs. Sea. She is concerned about her own health and that of her children. She is also sometimes very weary of those learners who exhibit symptoms of illness. It does

appear that Mrs. Sea's concerns and reservations make her more sensitive to the plight of other people and, in turn, make her more approachable. This could be why parents, learners, and neighbours feel comfortable talking to her. Mrs. Sea's ability to recognise her strengths and weaknesses shows that Mrs. Sea is internalising the process of inclusion, as highlighted by Lomofsky et al (1999b:71). She writes that "Clarity about their own strengths, vulnerabilities, and needs is a necessary step in preparing teachers for inclusion".

7.7 Strategies for working with learners experiencing barriers to learning

Mrs. Sea is very proud of her ability to assist some of the learners. She prides herself on her ability to investigate problems and solve some of them. Mrs. Sea had the following to say about identifying barriers to learning:



- "As ek moet wag vir die school clinic, sal ek heel jaar wag".
- "Somtyds voel ek dat ek net die probleem myself moet oplos".
- "Ek kan nie 'n jaar wag terwyl een van my kinders op die 'waiting list' wag nie".
- "Daar is nie iets specific wat ek doen as ek dink dat daar iets verkeerd is met 'n kind nie".
- "I'm like Sherlock Holmes sometimes; as ek suspicious is, moet ek my ore en oë oop hou".

Translations can be found on pages 128, 129

I would like to highlight the following points with regards to these statements. Mrs. Sea seems visibly frustrated by the lack of support in addressing barriers to learning. Educators who participated in research endeavours identified the same point as being a stressor which influenced them when trying to accommodate learners experiencing

barriers to learning (Eloff, Engelbrecht, & Swart, 2000). Mrs. Sea, on many occasions, discussed the strategies she uses to identify and accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning. Although Mrs. Sea often acknowledged that she did not possess the necessary skills to accommodate many of the learners, her confidence and self-assurance come across strongly in what she says and in how she accommodates the learners. These traits are mentioned often in the literature. For successful inclusion, educators must think positively and acknowledge their own strengths and weaknesses (Lomofsky et al, 1999b; Mills, 1979). Mrs. Sea's insecurity with regards to accommodating learners experiencing barriers to learning stems from insufficient training. Engelbrecht, Naicker, & Engelbrecht (1998); Nel (1996); Dessent, (1987); and Florian (1998), all highlight the importance of additional teacher training as a prerequisite for successful inclusion.



Mrs. Sea says that it has been her teaching experience, gut instinct, and her faith that have carried her through and helped her assist learners experiencing barriers to learning. There are many instances throughout Chapter 6 that demonstrate that Mrs. Sea's experience, gut instinct, and faith did indeed assist her in identifying barriers to learning and accommodating learners experiencing barriers to learning. What also comes across strongly is that Mrs. Sea has insight into children and is sensitive to their needs. The following extracts, taken from Chapter 6, highlight these points:

- Allan is 'n slim kind, maar hy is baie lui. Hy doen nie sy huiswerk nie, en werk net as ek dreig om met sy pa te praat. Jy sien, Juffrou [Mrs. Sea whispers] Allan se pa het 'n bietjie van 'n temper en as hy vir Allan begin slaan, dan roep die ouma vir die bure om hom weg van Allen te kry. Nou verstaan jy. Dit is hoekom ek nie keer op keer sy pa wil bel nie, maar somtyds is ek desperaat. Ek wil nie hê dat Allen weer in my klas moet sit nie.

- Ek het vir Enver by Francis en 'n paar meisies gesit. Die meisies haat dit as die seuns by hulle tafels kom sit, so ek weet hulle sal gou kla as Jackson of Christopher naby Enver kom. Sien juffrou, ek moet sharp wees; anders sal hulle my klas oorneem.
- “Veels geluk, baie goed, briljant, my bokkie, my engel”. The learners’ faces shine with pride and the class erupts in applause. Later, during an interview session, Mrs. Sea explains, “It is not good enough to just say, ‘Baie goed’; jy moet in hulle oë kyk sodat hulle weet that you mean what you are saying. Hierdie kinders moet weet ek gee om; ek is trots op hulle.

Translations can be found on pages 137, 138, 143

Taylor (1994:579) explains that “Special education instruction for many has simply been good teaching”. This aptly describes Mrs. Sea. The data shows that she always goes to great lengths to make the lessons exciting, innovative, and educational. In Chapter 6 there is a sense of the classroom and the activities that take place. Her innovation and energy comes through clearly in the way she teaches her learners. Here are a few additional illustrations:



“Party kinders kry moeilike vrae, want hulle kan cope, terwyl anders makliker vrae kry, want hulle sukkel met die werk”.

Once Mrs. Sea has completed the class, she instructs the learners to stand and applaud themselves.

“Ons sing saam en speel saam”.

Mrs. Sea starts off every day with a Bible lesson and spends most of the morning doing revision.

Mrs. Sea explained that she wanted the classroom to create their own *sonnestelsel* with cellophane.

Mrs. Sea sits flat on the mat with them as she explains the work again, much slower this time and constantly referring to examples. She praises the learners and often encourages them to assist each other.

Translations can be found on pages 147, 148, 124, 123, 149, 150

These and other descriptions in Chapters 5 and 6 show us that Mrs. Sea is able to do the following with the curriculum. Mrs. Sea is able to identify some difficulties in learning.

She acknowledges that there are possibly gifted learners in the class and she allows them to progress ahead of the class. Every day, she teaches the whole class and then assists those learners with academic problems. Her approach to learners experiencing barriers to learning is the same as with other learners: energetic, patient, and innovative. From the text, we can see that Mrs. Sea encourages peer tutoring and group work.

These descriptions are consistent with some of the literature on inclusive education and Outcomes Based Education. They highlight that Mrs. Sea has many of the competencies necessary to be an inclusive educator, as outlined by the National Competency Framework for Beginning Teachers (1997), Centre for Educational Research (1999) and Vaughn, Bos and Schumm, (2000). This is also in line with Outcomes Based Education, which by nature is inclusive (Naicker, 1999; Winkler, Modise, & Dawber, 1999; Engelbrecht, Eloff, Newmark, & Kachelhoffer, 1997).

There are things that Mrs. Sea does that do not accommodate some of the learners who experience barriers to learning. There are also some elements of inclusion and Outcomes Based Education that Mrs. Sea has failed or struggled to implement. They are presented below.

It looks as if Mrs. Sea is under pressure to make a success of the new curriculum even though she has some valid misgivings, as discussed in Chapter 5. I have never seen her set clear outcomes or share this with the learners. Possibly, because it could be difficult to inform 45 learners of the outcomes for the lesson, it is just logistically impossible. I also

do not think that Mrs. Sea has established an environment in which the learners give input in terms of what is taught, their expectations, or goals.

Inclusion and Outcomes Based Education encourages educators to make use of varied teaching strategies. Co-operative learning, group work, and peer tutoring, amongst others, are mentioned in the literature (Spady, 1994; Department of Education, 2002; Wade & Zone, 2000; and Knight, 1999). According to these individuals, these strategies facilitate the development of learners' self-esteem, encourage them to work together, and promote acceptance of difference.

The literature says that one must apply a specific strategy to obtain a desired response. I do not think the same can be said for Mrs. Sea. She uses strategies that work for her, but that does not necessarily mean that they work for the learners. Yes, Mrs. Sea uses group work so that learners can learn from each other, but it also keeps learners busy while she assists other learners. From this, I can see that she does not recognise the underlying skills that can develop. Mrs. Sea enjoys and encourages class discussions. I can see that she values their input. Her reasoning for this is different from that of the literature. She uses class discussions as these create order and also allow an opportunity for her to watch the learners to see, "Wie lyk asof hulle nie gisteraand geëet het nie, of wie lyk 'n bietjie siek, of wie het gisteraand gehuil". Here again, I do not think that she recognises that this form of teaching can facilitate the development of more skills. This does not mean that her reasons for using these techniques are invalid. On the contrary, I think that Mrs. Sea used these strategies to not only educate learners, but also to identify possible barriers to

learning. This tells me that Mrs. Sea is or has to be very resourceful in order to assist all the learners. Once Mrs. Sea has undergone additional training, she will undoubtedly be able to bring together her experiences and the theoretical orientations which will benefit her and the learners.

Mrs. Sea, it seems, does not have sufficient information with regard to assessment. She only assesses the learners through class tests, mini-assignments, and class work. These are all reflected in the learners' portfolios. I do not think that she knows that learners can be assessed in a variety of ways. It is clear that all the learners receive the same tasks and are assessed in the same manner, irrespective of the level they are on.

Mrs. Sea has a general expectation for all learners. If any learners struggle to meet these expectations, then Mrs. Sea steps in and assists them. Although it is obvious that the learners in Mrs. Sea's class are at different levels, Mrs. Sea does not address this issue nor does she re-assess her strategy; instead, she strives to get them all on par with the work. The following description was taken from Chapter 6 and highlights Mrs. Sea's possible inability to recognise that all learners cannot be at the same level.

- “Dikwels sien ek sien dat hy nie die werk verstaan nie. Ek sit met hom en ‘n paar ander kinders. Ek verduidelik die somme tien keer oor, maar dan kry Simon nog steeds die somme verkeerd. Ek dink daar is iets verkeerd met sy brein”.

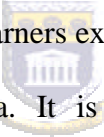
Translations can be found on page 131

Therefore, Vlachou (1993:75-79) makes a very valid point when he says, “It is necessary that teachers take note of the fact that individual differences exist in these children to the same extent that they exist in other children, and that they should interact with them in respect of their differences and particular needs”.

What is clear from the data is that some of the strategies Mrs. Sea uses to assist learners do work and some do not. What is also evident is that some techniques work for some of the learners and not for others. In the absence of additional training, Mrs. Sea uses techniques that she knows work, techniques that come from years of teaching or by trial and error. I do not think that Mrs. Sea recognises that what works for one learner is not necessarily going to work for others. Her strategies are clear-cut: love and affection for those learners with emotional problems, extra homework, tuition, and revision for those with academic problems, while at the same time she tries to instil discipline in those learners with behavioural problems.

When it comes to classroom management, Mrs. Sea comes across as autocratic; it is her classroom and the learners will abide by her rules. This is in contrast to what Emmer and Everton (1981) and Duke (1979) suggest: “that learners must help structure the rules of the classroom.” I think that Mrs. Sea does this because many of the learners are not disciplined at home. Mrs. Sea often explained that many of these learners’ parents work late and that the learners are left alone at home. Mrs. Sea does, though, display some very good classroom management skills. She does praise the learners often, she encourages attitudes like respect, and she engages learners about unacceptable behaviour. In Chapter

6, we can see that Mrs. Sea also has excellent observation skills and often defuses a possibly bad situation before it starts. This is similar to what Kliewer (2000) suggests: that classrooms need one rule – respect one another, and that teachers need excellent observational skills to determine what causes bad behaviour. Lewis (1999) discusses various classroom management approaches educators can use. He suggests that educators should listen and clarify students’ perspectives. Educators must also tell students about the impact their misbehaviour has on others. This summarises what Mrs. Sea does in her classroom.

As I pointed out earlier, many of the learner’s problems are more complex; this is possibly why some of the strategies do not work. I think that Mrs. Sea is lacking in theoretical background with regard to learners experiencing barriers to learning. I am sure this must be frustrating for Mrs. Sea.  It is pleasing that Mrs. Sea’s unwavering commitment to these learners will always spur her on to find new strategies to further educate herself so that she can assist them. The next section takes an in-depth look into educator training and support that is forthcoming at Whaleside Primary.

The importance of training is adequately highlighted in the literature. The literature suggests that professional development, pre-service, and in-service training provide educators with the necessary insight into learners with special needs. It also offers educators a better understanding of learners with special needs and presents practical suggestions and strategies to accommodate them (Engelbrecht, Naicker, & Engelbrecht, 1998; Nell, 1996; Dessent, 1987; Florian, 1998). What is consistent in the literature is

that educators must be adequately trained to accommodate learners with special needs (Morra, 1994; Nell, 1996). This is an area where the school, as a whole, falls short. Inclusive education has not been implemented at government level yet; therefore, the Department of Education has not initiated any training programmes of this nature for schools. In the absence of training which can address issues of learning barriers, it is almost unfair to expect Mrs. Sea to address all these barriers to learning on her own. This, I think, should be one of the first things that Whaleside Primary should do for all their educators. Once the educators are empowered with the necessary skills, other inclusive practices will fall into place.

In section 7.7, I outlined a number of characteristics, skills, and competencies that Mrs. Sea has or is yet to acquire. Earlier, I quoted Taylor (1994:579) as saying that “Special instruction for many has simply been good teaching”. From the above, it is clear to me that educating learners takes more than just ‘good teaching’. There is so much that must be in place to accommodate learners, particularly learners experiencing barriers to learning. Again, I pose the question, is it fair to expect so much from educators?

The model of support that Lazarus and Donald (1994), cited in Kriegler and Booyen (1996:78), devised is precisely what Whaleside Primary needs.

- Infusion of the health promotive and developmental practices of support services across all dimensions of the general curriculum
- A cascade or consultancy model of skill distribution – from highly skilled specialists (doctors, psychologists, etc), through medium skilled specialists (nurses, special educationists, counsellors, etc) and post-basic skilled teachers. This will ensure adequate support, referral options and most importantly, progressive empowerment and capacity building at different levels of the system.

Establishment of multipurpose district or community centres

A balance which accommodates curative as well as holistic, developmental and preventative programmes of action.

This model addresses many of the areas in which Whaleside Primary experiences problems. The school does have a teacher support team, does liaise with the school clinic, and has close ties with the community clinic. This is in line with policy as outlined by the Department of Education (2001). It is important to note that Whaleside is one of the many schools that the school clinic and community clinic cater for. The learners in Mrs. Sea's class are often on long waiting lists and she herself often has to wait for weeks before she can see anyone at the school clinic to engage them on any of the learners. Doctors or psychologists are not readily available to the school, which does make Mrs. Sea's job more difficult.



Within an inclusive system, the educator is recognised as a full partner with professionals, parents, and others and now has increased responsibilities for co-ordinating the activities of learners with disabilities (Givner & Haager, 1995). Engelbrecht, Forlin, Eloff, and Swart (2001:84) write that "It is now accepted that teachers have to wear a number of hats to be successful in helping all learners gain the skills necessary for becoming independent and productive members of society". Is it really fair to expect educators to take on more responsibilities? Are they not overburdened as it is? Will educators be remunerated for their specialist skills?

I think, to a large extent, the school has been very proactive in outsourcing organisations or people that can either engage the learners on relevant issues or teach or share with educators developmental programmes that can benefit the learners.

7.8 The researcher

Initially, when I started my research at Whaleside Primary, I was overwhelmed by everything. I had not taught before; this was my first experience in a school setting. I was very naïve and came from a relatively sheltered background, so Whaleside Primary was a huge ‘reality check’ for me. I knew that there were schools situated in disadvantaged areas that had a high educator:child ratio and poor facilities. However, I had never seen it for myself.



I started out thinking that I could save the school. I donated a large number of toys and educational posters, brought extra lunch, and even tried to raise some money for the school. I thought that I could start my own free aftercare and started planning training programmes for the school. My research became lost in my mission to save this school. My supervisor and Mrs. Sea were instrumental in keeping me focused on the task at hand. My time at the school helped me to map out realistic goals for myself as an educator. During this time, I learnt so much about myself. I learnt that I often take on too much, but also that I genuinely enjoy working with children and have an excellent rapport with them. I left Whaleside Primary with a newfound respect for all educators. I saw all the

work that they do, but also recognised that there are some educators who are burnt out and frustrated.

My experience at Whaleside Primary empowered me with the necessary coping skills and confidence which helped me considerably when I started teaching for the first time. I was able to implement many of the things that I learnt, especially creative ways to address discipline problems. When I look at myself as an educator, I often see Mrs. Sea. I learnt so much from her. I learnt that knowledge is important and empowers me as an educator, but a pleasant character and a fun-loving personality is equally important. My time at Whaleside Primary re-affirmed my commitment to assisting learners with barriers to learning. I now try to live this commitment as an educator in a mainstream high school.



7.9 Limitations and shortcomings

This research has the inevitable limitations of any case study, as outlined in Chapter 4.

Secondly, I spent quite a bit of time at Whaleside Primary. I became very involved with the school. I think this sometimes clouded my judgement, and it is possible that I sometimes over interpreted the data.

Thirdly, it was difficult to establish the boundaries of the ‘case’: school versus classroom versus setting. The educator and ways in which she accommodates learners experiencing barriers to learning was the focus of this research. The socio-economic context of the

learners came through strongly in the research and was considered in the explanation of the social context in which the school finds itself in.

Fourthly, the lack of access to parent perspectives can be considered a limitation of the study. This research, though, primarily involved the learners and educator.

I must stress that since the completion of this research, there have been many changes within Outcomes Based Education. It is now better established, and training and support for schools have improved.

7.10 Recommendations



After reviewing the findings of this study, I wish to make the following recommendations for the school, Mrs. Sea, and the Department of Education.

Practical suggestions for Whaleside Primary and Mrs. Sea:

The school should explore options for community support.

The school should try to get the parents more involved.

Mrs. Sea should find ways of collaborating with other educators and building support networks.

Additional training will help Mrs. Sea to accommodate those learners with learning barriers.

Mrs. Sea should explore avenues of support that could be helpful to herself in the classroom, particularly in areas of child abuse and HIV/Aids.

Mrs. Sea needs to re-think the role of parents and caregivers with respect to the support they offer learners.

Mrs. Sea should also be alert to the nature of the family and be realistic in terms of expectations of parents.

Mrs. Sea should address the issue of better parental involvement, but should possibly re-look at the extent to which parents can be involved and work around what they *can* do and not around her expectations of them as parents.

A suggestion for the Department of Education:

The department should, as a first step, engage with educators about their experiences with learners who have learning barriers before implementing inclusion. Their input will definitely streamline the process and could even highlight issues that could further assist the process.

Recommendations in terms of future research:

An investigation should be undertaken into how schools can get community support going.

Research needs to be conducted into the changing role of family support for children at school.



A study should be done on school clinics, their effectiveness, and to what extent collaboration has been successful.

An investigation into the parents of learners who experience barriers to learning to determine their perceptions on inclusion is recommended.

Research should be conducted into the ways families that are poor cope with their children who are experiencing barriers to learning.

7.11 Conclusion

This research highlighted conditions in a classroom in a disadvantaged area with reference to inclusion. As I looked at the data, it raised many questions that I still cannot answer. I would like this research to stimulate discussion and debate with regard to all aspects of education and, it is to be hoped, lead to more insight into learners experiencing

barriers to learning. I hope that this research may inspire and re-energise all educators to embrace their profession and applaud themselves, because children are precious jewels that will blossom under our guidance and tutelage.



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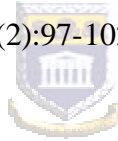
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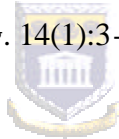
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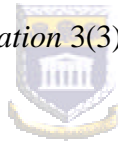
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APPENDIX 1

Dates of interviews and topics of interviews

- | | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| April 2000 | - | Getting to know Mrs. Sea |
| | - | History of the school |
| | - | Inclusive education and Mrs. Sea |
| May 2000 | - | describing the learners |
| | - | how has education changed over the years |
| | - | Mrs. Sea's concerns |
| July 2000 | - | learners experiencing barriers to learning |
| | - | identifying barriers to learning |
| | - | accommodating barriers to learning |
| | - | accommodating barriers to learning (continued) |
| September 2000 | - | case studies on learners experiencing barriers to learning |
| | - | case studies on learners experiencing barriers to learning
(continued) |
| | - | accommodating these learners experiencing barriers to
learning |
| | - | accommodating these learners experiencing barriers to
learning (continued) |

APPENDIX 2

Interview transcript

The following interview took place in July 2000 and how looked into Mrs. Sea addresses barriers to learning. The interview took place after school in Mrs. Sea's classroom.

Question: What do you do when a learner struggles with their school work?

Mrs. Sea: "As ek nou na die hele klas kyk dan moet ek sê dat die meeste van hulle probleme het met Lees en Wiskunde. Ons almal weet dat as jy sukkel om te lees sal jy sukkel met jou Wiskunde. Hulle vorder goed met Engels, maar, soos baie mense, dink hulle in Afrikaans en dan skryf hulle in Engels."



"Ek moet sê dat baie van hulle net lui is, maar daar is 'n handvol wat miskien probleme by die huis het, of hulle is nie so gesond nie, of hulle het wel 'n probleem met Lees en Wiskunde." (long silence)

"Somtyds dink ek dat ek 'n slegte juffrou is, maar die kinders doen nie hulle werk nie, niemand help vir hulle as hulle sukkel nie, ek kan nie baie tyd op een taak spandeer nie. Hulle aandag, ag nou ja baie van hulle sal liewers buite wees. Ek probeer, I do revision, ek gee ekstra lesse na skool, maar as hulle nie hulle sommetjies practise of lees by die huis nie, dan sal hulle nie vorder met hulle skool werk nie."

Question: Do you find that OBE is helpful?

Mrs. Sea: “Baie keer sukkel ek met OBE, ek moet confident wees, want ek moet die ander onderwysers train. Ek raak kwaad as die department keer op keer die goed verander en nie vir ons ordentlike riglyne gee nie. Wie help vir my, niemand nie. Nou doen ek net my eie ding – maar so ver is ons alraait, die inspekteur is gelukkig met ons werk. Daar is baie administratiewe werk, die onderwyser en leerling het ‘n portfolio. Die range statements, performance indicators en al die outcomes maak somtyds vir ons deermekaar. OBE sê dat ons minder toetse moet gee, ja ek glo ook hierin, maar nou moet ek huiswerk gee en baie van die kinders doen dit nie, of mammië en pappie het nie tyd nie, hulle kom mos laat huis toe. Of luister hierna, mammië en pappie doen dit self. Ek kan onmiddellik sien dat die handskrifte verskillend is. Ek dink nie dat die department van hierdie realities gedink nie, hulle dink net van die ryk mense.” (lifts her hands up)

Question: How do you know when a learner has an emotional problem?

Mrs. Sea: “Elke oggend moet ek kyk hoe lyk hulle gesiggies. Wie lyk asof hulle nie gisteraand geëet het nie, of wie lyk ‘n bietjie siek, of wie het gisteraand gehuil. Ek moet ook goed luister, want so kom die stories uit van wat by die huis gebeur en so weet ek as dinge sleg of goed gaan. It helps that these learners live in a close community, everyone knows everyone’s business.”

Question: Why do you start every lesson with a Bible story?

Mrs. Sea: “Ons tel hoeveel profete daar is en ons skryf nuwe woorde op die bord. OBE sê mos jy moet nie net lifeskills teach nie, jy moet ook ‘n bietjie Maths en Tale in sit. Ek laat die kinders self die nuwe woorde op die bord skryf, hulle voel so groot as hulle self op die bord skryf en op so ‘n manier leer die kinders van mekaar”.

“Ek hou daarvan om elke oggend te begin met ‘n storie van die Bybel. So weet ek dat die Here na my en die kinders sal kyk, en vir my die krag gee om te cope. Die Whaleside gemeenskap is baie kerklik. Die kinders gaan gereeld Bybel klas toe en geniet elke oggend se storie. I choose stories that teach us not to cheat, steal or lie. Die kinders weet dat hierdie soort goed in hulle huis en gemeenskap afgang. Hulle moet weet dat dit verkeerd is en dat God vir daardie mense sal straf.”



Question: You said in a previous interview that you only do new work after interval. Why?

Mrs. Sea: “In die oggend sukkel hierdie kinders om te konsentreer, hulle breine kan net werk na dat hulle iets geëet het. Daar is ook daardie stoute paartjies, soos Christopher en Jackson wat baie keer lag-lag skool toe kom gedurende pouse.”

Question: You seem to be very good at instilling discipline. What is your secret?

Mrs. Sea: (she laughs) “Disipliene is iets wat almal van ons hier by Whaleside mee sukkel. Die kinders is nie meer bang vir die prinsipaal nie, so as ek sê, ‘Ek gaan jou kantoor toe stuur’ kyk die kinders vir my aan en ek weet hulle dink, ‘What’s the big deal.’ This is what I usually do if there is a discipline problem. Ek doen eers ‘n vra uit sessie met kind en ouers oor huislike omstandighede, of ek lees in handboeke en probeer om handleidings te kry wat sal help.”

“As the years go on, you, as an educator, become more and more clever when it comes to discipline. Jy moet sharp wees, anders sal die kinders vir jou gek maak. So, die goed wat ek in die klas doen om die kinders stil te hou is maar goed wat ek hier en daar opgetel het. Laat ek nou vir jou iets leer, jy moet as min as moontlik skreeu, jy is nog jonk, jy moet na jou stem kyk. As jy baie skreeu raak die kinders gewoon daar- aan. Dit is hoekom baie van die onderwysers soos mal mense skreeu, en skreeu en skreeu (she whispers). Die kinders worry nie. Ek gee net een harde skreeu dan hop die kinders en daars stilte (she laughs) ek het vir jou ook gesien hop.”

“Die musiek juffrou by die skool waar ek voorheen geteach het, het baie min gepraat. As sy op die tamborine geslaan het, het die kinders geweet dat hulle op die mat moes sit. As sy die triangle gebruik het, het hulle geweet dat hulle hul boeke moes uithaal. So het ek ook geleer.”

“Som van die goed doen ek net omdat ek moeg is. Jy sal nog sien by tien uur is my keel droog en my kop lekker seer. Ek sê vir hulle, ‘Ek sit my hand op en as ek my hand sak moet almal stil bly.’ Dan dink ek, ‘Dankie vader, stilte vir ‘n paar minute.’ These silent moments keep me sane.”

“Ek het sommer gou geleer hoe om die kinders ook in te span, sodat ek nie keer op keer dieselfde goed oor en oor moet verduidelik nie. As ons nou besig is met ‘n taak, verduidelik ek vir hulle wat hulle moet doen. Dan kry ek ‘n leerling om weer die opdrag oor te sê. Die kinders geniet dit baie, soos jy gesien het. Hulle spring op, klim op mekaar om gekies te word. Wat hulle nie weet nie is, so verseker ek dat hulle goed na my luister.”

Question: You have an excellent rapport with these learners. You are all very close. What are your thoughts on this?

Mrs. Sea: It is nice and scary.

Question: Scary? What do you mean?

Mrs. Sea: “Persoonlik weet ek dat ek, te geheg aan die kinders is. Ek ken vir hulle van graad 1. Ek is soos hulle mammië, dit is nie goed vir hulle nie, dit is nie goed vir my nie, because I sometimes get too emotionally involved. Ek baby hulle te veel, hulle het net baie liefde nodig, they don’t often get attention at home, veral as mammië en pappie baklei het. Die skool met al sy probleme, kry my onder, ek weet dat dinge hier nie sal verander nie,

want die gemeenskap sal nie verander nie. Hier is goed wat nou aan gaan wat ek nooit tevore van gehoor het nie, (she whispers) soos child abuse. ‘n Mens mag nie van hierdie soort goed praat nie, but we must educate our children, ek self wil op ‘n course gaan oor child abuse want ek weet niks daarvan nie. (A long silence follows) I must tell you I have sleepless nights worrying about these children, som aande huil ek, ek maak myself sick. My dokter sê vir my dat my hernia al hoe erger word want ek het te veel stress.”



APPENDIX 3

Interview transcript

The following interview took place in September 2000. We discussed how teaching affects Mrs. Sea's family life. The interview took place after school in Mrs. Sea's classroom.

Question: You spoke about your husband's illness. Would you mind telling me how this affects you and your teaching?

Mrs. Sea: (long silence) "This stressful circumstance takes a lot out of the children and me." (long silence again)

"Eerste het ek en die kinders die uit geblock. Ons wou nie aanvaar nie dat hy miskien dood sal gaan. We joined a support group by die kerk to strengthen our faith."

"Somtyd laat in die aand dan moet ek vir hom hospital to rush. As ek skool toe kom dan werk ek ekstra hard."

"Somtyds dan gaan dit regtig opdrands, dan speel ek met die kinders, ons sing en ons maak grappe, dan vergeet ek 'n bietjie van my probleme."

"God hou my aan die gang, Hy gee my die krag om hierdie werk te doen."

Question: What is your biggest fear?

Mrs. Sea: “Ek dink my grootste gevaar is dat ek siek word deur een van die kinders deur middel van tuberculosis of AIDS (pause). Hierdie ouers sê vir ons niks. Wat as ek vir my familie aansteek? Ek moet kop hou. As die kinders voor my hoes, stoot ek vir hulle weg, as hulle val en ek moet die wond skoon maak, gebruik ek surgical gloves. I take no chances, because of all the stuff that I have seen here at the school, I feel that I am stricter and harder on my own children. Ek laat hulle nie alleen uitgaan nie, my husband and I drop them and fetch them. Niks van girlfriends en boyfriends nie, oe nee. Hulle weet as hulle met ‘n slegte report huis toe kom, sal ek soos ‘n mal mens aan gaan. I want them to make something of themselves. I don’t want them to struggle like me or end up like some of the families in Whaleside. Respek en dissipliene dit is baie belangrik, my kinders weet, as hulle ombeskof is, sal ek vir hulle gou klap. Hulle weet hulle ma sal nie staan vir ombeskoft kinders nie. Baie keer praat my man met my en hy sê dat ek nie regverdig is nie en dat my kinders goed is en dat ek ‘n chill pill moet vat (she laughs). Ek kan dit nie help nie, die skool het my hard gemaak.”

Question: You often refer to the learners as ‘a new generation of children’ what do you mean?

Mrs. Sea: “Jy moet weet juffrou, they’re a new generation of children, geen respect, ombeskof, vloek en baklei. Waar leer hulle hierdie goed? By die huis, by mammi en pap, wat geen respect vir mekaar het nie en wat vloek en

baklei met mekaar. Hulle leer nie tuis dissipline aan nie. Kinders word groot gemaak deur ouma's, tante of bure of daar is soms te veel mense wat in een huis woon. Kinders soos Ashley, Enver, Christopher, Allan en Jackson, ek voel jammer vir hulle. As ek nie streng met hulle is nie, dan een van die dae is hulle die nuwe gangsters in Whaleside. Hulle begin nou al.”



APPENDIX 4

Jason

After a visit to the clinic last year Jason was diagnosed as being hard of hearing. Mrs. Sea explains that since then she has been battling with Jason's parents to do something about his problem, but to no avail. The school clinic has been slow in assisting Jason to get a hearing aid. Mrs. Sea says that she often feels bad when she forgets to remind Jason to face her when she is talking to him. "Maar met 30 anders kinders can you blame me?" Mrs. Sea says that Jason is well behaved and is often content to just play with his friends and draw in class. Things do become problematic when his friends start shouting at him when he does not respond to them, which often leads to a bit of chaos in the classroom. Mrs. Sea is of the opinion that although Jason has thus far barely scraped through academically, he does have the potential to improve if she only had the time to sit with him on a one-to-one basis. Mrs. Sea explains that she gets little support from his parents. "Jason se pa het 'n temper, hy het nie die patience om vir Jason te help nie. Jason se ma het vir my een keer gesê dat Jason se pa gesê het dat sy net vir Jason uit sy pad moet hou. Jason's se ma kan nie elke aand met hom sit nie, want sy kom maar eers om sewe uur huis toe."

Paul

Paul is very quiet, does not participate in class and seldom interacts with his classmates. This makes it very hard for Mrs. Sea to assess Paul and determine what his problem is. Paul does stutter when he reads, but Mrs. Sea explains that Paul reads so softly that she often cannot understand what he is reading. Paul has stuttered since grade 1. Some of the boys often tease Paul, calling him 'hakkelbek', ignore him during group discussions and laugh when he tries to talk. On the whole, Paul is a good student who does well in his languages and mathematics. It is clear from his portfolio work that his homework is supervised and that he is revising his schoolwork regularly. When Mrs. Sea asked to see a parent, Paul's oldest sister arrived and explained to Mrs. Sea that she took care of Paul as best she could. The sister relayed to Mrs. Sea that Mrs. Smith, Paul's mother, had never taken an interest in Paul. Mrs. Smith suffered from severe depression after giving birth to Paul, her 5th child. Mrs. Sea states, "Wat vir my bekommer is dat hierdie kind daarvan hou om op sy eie te wees en hier is 'n kind wat geen bond met sy ma het nie." In the same breath Mrs. Sea emphasises that although Paul is quiet and withdrawn in class he works well. He always does his homework and mini tasks and his sister often meets with Mrs. Sea at school to discuss Paul's progress.

Stephen

It was Stephen's parents who approached Mrs. Sea at the end of last year concerned that Stephen might have a slight lisp. Mrs. Sea was aware that Stephen's parents struggle financially. She made inquiries at the school clinic and even went as far as getting a doctor friend of hers to refer them to a speech therapist that would see Stephen at no cost. Mrs. Sea laughs when she talks about Stephen. "Stephen is the class clown, well liked by everyone and part of the cool click. Therefore if anyone teases Stephen about his lisp, they know they will have to deal with Ashley or Christopher's fists. Stephen is very well liked by both his peers and all the educators in the school. Die juffrouens dink almal hy is so oulik met sy lisp. Sometimes I think he uses it to charm his way out of trouble. His speech has improved and his speech therapist has been most helpful in suggesting ways in which I can assist him in class. Stephen is very clever, as hy nou net nie so speëlerig is nie dan sal hy beter doen."



Amy

"Amy, wat ashmatic is, wil 'n nurse word, sy hou daarvan om vir almal te sorg. Onthou jy die keer toe Christopher vir Jason met 'n klip gegooi het? Dit was Amy wat die first aid kit gaan hal het en vir my gehelp het met die sny op sy kop. Ek dink dat sy 'n nurse wil wees want sy wil ook na mense kyk op dieselfde manier waarop haars ouers na haar kyk. Amy bly nou ver van die skool. Nou gaan ek maar na haar huis toe, dan speel ons soos Amy sê 'skooltjie skooltjie'. Hulle familie sukkel nou baie, dan neem ek maar 'n brood en melk saam en Amy wag altyd vir haar box smarties (she laughs). Amy se ouers weet dat hulle vir Amy moet help met haar skool werk, want sy sukkel met haar lees werk. Baie keer as sy moet lees in die aand sê sy dat sy siek voel, Haar ouers voel jammer vir haar, this does not help me as a teacher."

Terry

Mrs. Sea explains that Terry has been battling to come to terms with her father's death. He was stabbed to death during a gang fight. Terry has since become withdrawn, sucks her thumb, cries often and constantly needs Mrs. Sea's attention. Terry's work has as a result suffered tremendously, but she is an otherwise very studious learner. Many of her exercises are incomplete, her test results are poor and she no longer does her homework.

Joshua

Mrs. Sea thinks that, "Die ouers wil nie vir ons sê dat hulle kinders TB het nie, because of the stigma. Jy moet onthou as die kinders dit het, dan het die ouers miskien TB en TB is related to AIDS. Joshua se ouers is een van hulle. Ek was skoons geskok toe Mrs. Brummer vir my kom se het dat Joshua die TB medication moet neem. You see Juffrou we organised that the school clinic would drop off the TB medication at school and we would ensure that the children take it. Toe begin ek vir hom dop hou, hy is baie keer awesig, baie maer en sieklik perty keer. Ek het daarem geskrik toe hy eers in Gavin se gesig gehoes het. Ek het onmiddelik besluit hier moet ek action wat. Ek het Joshua se ouers gebel en sy ma het net gesê dat hulle geweet het en gou daarna vir my gevra of Joshua stout was. The clinic tells the parents don't worry TB is curable and the school will help with the administration of medicine. Skielik is die kind nou my probleem. Don't get me wrong, Joshua is 'n lieflike kind wat baie goed kan lees en wat daarvan hou om stories te skryf, maar ek kry die horries as hy eerste in iemand se gesig hoes, sal jy nie ook nie. Sy ma bel nie as hy afwesig is nie en hy bly perty keer vir twee weke uit die skool uit. Dan kom hy weer lag-lag in die klas in, 'Oo Juffrou ek het jou so gemis'. As hy nou afwesig is, bel ek sommer vir die ma, en weet jy wat, somtyds hou sy vir hom by die huis want sy dink dit is te koud vir hom en dan is dit glad nie koud nie. As Joshua wel siek is dan stuur ek huiswerk saan met Helen in graad 4, sy bly in dieselfde pad. Na 'n week of so kom Joshua weer skool toe met dieselfde pakkie en niks huiswerk was voltooi nie. Dan sit hy in my klas en hy weet glad nie wat aan gaan nie. Se nou vir my Juffrou kan ek so 'n ouer aankla?" (Mrs. Sea's frustration is visible).

Sally

“Hulle is nou my engeltjies. Sally, Amy en Terry. Sally en Amy are ashmatics. Hulle help gedurig vir my in die klas en na skool as hulle vir hulle boeties wag. Hulle geniet vir hulle by die skool. Ek hoop dit bly so (she laughs). Sally en Amy se ouers kom baie vir my sien. Ons het ‘n system uitgewerk. As Sally afwesig is dan weet ek dat haar ouers vir haar by haar ouma los in die dag. Dan moet ek al haar werk by mekaar sit dan kom haar oupa dit haal. Foei-tog, Sally raak baie hartseer as sy siek is, want sy mis skool, dan stuur ek gewoonlik vir haar ‘n pakkie lekkers om haar op te cheer. Dit is nou een ding van Sally haar werk is altyd verskriklik netjies en organised. Ek stuur altyd vir haar ‘n bietjie extra werk, want ek weet she enjoys the challenge. Haar ouers sê she sometimes over does it en dan word sy weer siek. Haar maatjies by haar tafel sal altyd vir haar briefies skryf. Somtyds skryf almal ‘n briefie vir Sally, so doen ek taal werk ook. Ek weet dit is skelm, maar ‘n juffrou moet al die trieks gebryk om die kinders te laat werk.”



Mark

“Hierdie kind nou, ai, dit is nou ‘n jammer, Mark mag nie van sy pa praat nie.” Mrs Sea suspects that Mark’s mother left his father after years of abuse. Mrs. Sea describes Mark as a very timid boy who cries quickly when he is reprimanded. Hy huil nog as sy ma hom aflaaï by die skool in die oggend and Mark always sits on his mothers lap when she attends the PTSA meetings. Mrs. Sea believes that Mark lacks self-confidence, which ultimately leads to the other boys bullying him. His lack of self-confidence also affects his schoolwork, he often day dreams and struggles to complete tasks. Ek probeer om hom so veel as moontlik te prys, maar hy gedra hom soos ‘n baba, en dit kan ek nou net nie verdra nie. Sy wiskunde en tale is glad nie sleg nie, hy vaar veel beter as baie van die ander kinders in die klas. As hy nou net ‘n bietjie meer effort in sy werk sit. Ag nou ja.”

Ashley

“Twee anties van oor vyftig kyk na Ashley terwyl sy pa werk. Sy ma is 4 jaar gelede oorlede aan kanker. Ek voel jammer vir die anties, hulle is oud en het nie veel geduld met arme Ashley nie. Ashley is ook nie ‘n engel nie. Perty dae dink ek dat hy out of control is. Hy luister nooit na my nie, kom en gaan soos hy wil. Die prinsipaal wil vir hom en Christopher expel. Ek moet hare op my tande het hulle te handle.” Mrs. Sea believes that Ashley needs discipline in his life. He bunks school, is repeating grade 3, seldom listens to her, cannot wait his turn to speak, fights and sometimes even steals. “Ek weet ek moet nie so sê nie maar ek is so bly dat hy darem die jaar gaan slaag want dan volgende jaar is hy uit my hare uit en iemand anders se probleem. Ashley praat baie min in die klas, but if there’s trouble at school Ashley, Christopher, Jackson en Allan are not far behind. All I can do is seperate them in class, maar as ek my rug draai dan is hulle saam. Ek dink Ashley moet net weg van hierdie groep, as Jackson en Allan afwesig is dan is my klas ‘n dream, dan kan ek vir Ashley handle en hy doen sy werk.”

Gavin

“Daar is tog my bright sparks, Franscis en Gavin. Ons het van Franscis vrouer gepraat, my mathematics genius. Gavin lees en skryf soos ‘n graad 5 leerling, magies hy skryf mooi.” Gavin has a good support system in place at home, Mrs. Sea explains. His mother is actively involved in his schooling and regularly engages Mrs. Sea in discussions about Gavin. Gavin’s aunt is a librarian and Mrs. Sea believes that this is where his love for books comes from.

Arnold

Tears well up in Mrs. Sea’s eyes as she describes Arnold. He is very mature for his age, even though he is repeating grade 3. “Die kind het baie mooi maniere, en vorder goed hierdie jaar. Ek is bly ons het hom agter gehou, hy sal nou beter cope in graad 4.” Arnold sleeps on the floor at home, cooks and cleans and often has to carry his mother into the house when she is too drunk and falls outside their home. Arnold takes very good care of his mother by keeping the house clean and cooking, but is still very embarrassed when she comes to school. Last year Mrs. Phillips arrived at Arnolds PTSA meeting drunk, fell out of her chair and it was Arnold who helped her while all the other parents just watched.

Candice

“As ‘n mens net na Candice kyk sal jy nie glo dat sy net in graad 3 is nie. Sy lyk soos ‘n vrou, ek bedoel nou haar form. Ek moet baie keer met Candice praat oor haar gedrag teenoor die ouer seuns in die skool. She is provocative, and flirtatious. Baie van die onderwysers kan dit sien, sy is net ougat, finish en klaar. Maar baie keer dink ek hoe weet Candice van al die goed. Sy het een keer vir Christopher in die klas gesoen, soos ‘n groot mens, ek was geskok. Ek het vir haar gevra, of sy dit op die televisie gesien het. Candice het gelag en gesê dat haar vriend wat in hoerskool is vir haar gewys het. Wat moet ek doen, wat sê ek vir so ‘n kind. Ek wil haar nek om draai. Candice is so slim, werk goed in die klas en kom van ‘n baie goeie familie. Wat sê ek vir haar ouers.”



Sam

“Ek en Sam se ouma gaan na dieselfde kerk. Sy het vir my een aand gebel en vir my vertel dat Sam se ma se nuwe kêrel baie keer langs Sam slaap. Sam se ma werk ver en gaan baie vroeg van die huis weg. Die ouma sorg dan vir Sam en baie oggende as sy vir Sam wakker maak dan slaap die kêrel nou langs haar. “Ek moet sê ek was altyd suspicious van hom. Hy bring vir Sam skool toe soen vir haar and he hugs her in a funny way, if you know what I mean. Ek het probeer om vir Sam se ma te waarsku maar sy het net gesê dat hy self gesê het dat hy baie lief was vir Sam en wou ook vir haar aanneem as sy eie kind. Sam sukkel ‘n bietjie by die skool, ek stuur baie keer so paar sommetjies huis toe of ‘n ekstra boek om te lees. Sam doen nooit die werk nie, dan sê sy dat sy en haar nuwe pappie televisie gekyk het. Nou sê jy vir my as hy nou werklik vir haar lief is sal hy nou nie vir haar met haar skool werk help nie. As ek vir hom sien in die middag dan lus ek om vir hom ‘n taai klap te gee. Hulle moet net sy afsny (looks angry).”



Angela

Mrs. Sea only recently found out that Angela's parents were divorced. Mr. Davids, Angela's father arrived early to fetch Angela and then introduced Mrs Sea to his future bride. “Sy lyk ‘n bietjie jonk as jy my vra.” Mrs. Sea says, “Angela se hart is baie seer. Daar is ‘n tekortkoming van iets. Ek weet nie presis nie, maar ons sal sien wat ons kan doen. Angela is ‘n pragtige dogtertjie met groen oë. Sy was maar altyd ‘n still kind, en kan lekker werk. She is a very secretive child, maak altyd haar werk toe en hou nie van groep werk nie. Pouse moet ek haar uit die klas jaag, sy speel nie met die ander kinders nie en sy hou daarvan om huis-huis te speel met haar poppe. Ek sê altyd vir haar jy is te groot vir poppe. Angela lyk somtyds asof sy in ‘n dream world is. Toe ek met die pa gepraat het, het hy gesê dat ek liever net op sy dogter se skool werk moet konsenteer. Wat doen ‘n mens nou in hierdie geval, sy doen goed in haar skool werk maar ek kan sien dat sy ongelukkig is. Miskien mis sy net haar mammie.”

APPENDIX 4 - TRANSLATIONS

Jason

children can you blame me?" "With 30 other

Jason's' father has a temper, his father does not have the patience to help him. Jason's' mother told me that his father told her that she must just keep Jason out of his way. Jason's' mother cannot sit with him every night because she only gets home at seven o' clock."

Paul

'stutter mouth',

"What worries me is that this child enjoys being on his own and it does not seem like he bonded with his mother."



Stephen

All the teachers think that his lisp is so cute.

he will do much better if he is not so playful.”



Amy

“Amy wants to be a nurse, she enjoys taking care of everyone. Do you remember the time when Christopher threw Jason with a stone; it was Amy who went to fetch the first aid kit and helped me with the cut on his head? I think that she wants to be a nurse so that she can take care of people in the same manner as her parents take care of her. Amy stays far from the school. So I go to her house and then, as she says, we play ‘school’. Her family struggles financially, so I take a loaf of bread and some milk, Amy always waits for her box of smarties (She laughs). Amy’s parents know that they must help her with her schoolwork, because she struggles with her reading. Often when she has to do school work in the evening she says that she is feeling sick. Her parents feel sorry for her and this does not help me as a teacher.”

Joshua

“The parents do not want to tell us that their children have TB because of the stigma attached to having TB. You must remember that if the child has TB, then the parents probably have it and TB is related to AIDS. Joshua’s parents are of these; I was shocked when the school nurse, Mrs. Brummer, informed me that Joshua needed to take his TB medication.

“Then I started monitoring him: he is absent often and he is sometimes sickly. I got such a fright when he spat into Gavin’s face. I decided immediately that I had to take action. I phoned Joshua’s parents and she just said that she knew and then she quickly thereafter asked if Joshua was naughty. The clinic tells the parents not to worry, TB is curable, the school will help with the administration of medication, and suddenly the child becomes our problem. Don’t get me wrong Joshua is a lovely child who reads well and enjoys writing stories, but I panic when he first coughs into someone’s face, won’t you?

His mother does not phone when he is absent and he sometimes stays absent for up to two weeks. Then he just comes back to class and says, “Miss I missed you so much.” If he is absent now I contact his mother and you know what, sometimes she keeps him at home because she thinks that it is too cold, when actually it is not cold at all. When Joshua is indeed ill his neighbour Helen, in grade 4 drops off some homework for him. After a few weeks Joshua returns to school with the same homework incomplete. He then sits in the class and does not know what is going on. You tell me, can I lodge a complaint against such a parent?

Sally

“They are now my angels. Sally and Amy are asthmatics. They are always helping me in class and after school while they wait for their brothers. They enjoy school. I hope it stays that way Sally and Amy’s parents visit me often. We have a system in place. If Sally is absent then I know that her parents drop her off at her grandparents. I put together all her work, which her grandfather then collects. Shame, Sally gets very heart sore when she is sick because she misses school, I usually send her a packet of sweets just to cheer her up. That is now one thing about Sally, her work is always neat and organised. I always send her extra work, because I know that she enjoys the challenge. Her parents feel that she over exerts herself with the extra load and then gets sick. Her friends who sit with her will always write her a letter. Sometimes everyone writes a letter to Sally, in this way I get to do some language work. I know this is cheating, but a teacher must use all the tricks at her disposal to get the children to work.”



Mark

“This child, oh dear, it is a shame. Mark is not allowed to talk about his father.”

“He still cries when his
mother drops him off at school in the morning

“I try to praise him as often as possible, but he acts like a baby and I cannot stand that. His Mathematics and his Languages are not too bad, he does much better than most of the other children, if only he put in more effort. Oh well.”



Ashley

“Two aunts who are over fifty look after Ashley while his father is at work. His mother died of cancer. I feel sorry for his aunts because they are old and do not have much patience with poor Ashley. Ashley is not an angel. Sometimes I think that he is out of control. He never listens to me and comes and goes as he pleases. The principal wants to expel Christopher and Ashley. I must have nerves of steel to cope with them.

“I know that I shouldn’t be saying this, but I am so happy that he will be passing this year because then he will be someone else’s problem. Ashley does not talk much in the class

but once I turn my back
they are all back together. I think that Ashley must get himself out of this group. When Jackson and Allen are absent then my classroom is a dream and I can then handle Ashley and he does his work.”

Gavin

“There are some bright sparks. Francis and Gavin. We spoke about Francis earlier, my Mathematics genius. Gavin writes like a grade 5 student, wow, he writes beautifully.

Arnold

and is progressing well this year. I am glad that he is repeating, he will now cope much better in grade 4.”



“This child has good manners

Candice

“If you just look at Candice you won’t believe that she is only in grade 3. She looks like a woman, I mean her shape. I have to often talk to Candice about her behaviour towards the older boys in the school

Many of the teachers can see this, she is just ‘ougat’ and that’s it. But I often think to myself how does Candice know about all of this stuff. She kissed Christopher once in the class like an adult, I was shocked.

I asked her if she saw it on television. Candice laughed and told me that her friend in high school showed her.

What must I do, what do I say to a child like that? I want to wring her neck. Candice is a clever child, works well in my class and comes from a good family. What do I tell her parents.”



Sam

“Sam’s grandmother and I go to the same church. She phoned me one evening and told me that Sam’s mom’s new boyfriend sometimes sleeps next to Sam. Sam’s mother works far and she leaves home very early in the morning. The grandmother sees to Sam and many mornings when she goes to wake Sam she would find the mother’s boyfriend lying next to her. “I must say that I was always suspicious of him. He brings Sam to school and kisses her and hugs her in a funny way, if you know what I mean. I tried to warn Sam’s mother but she told me that he himself told her that he loved Sam and wanted to adopt her. Sam is struggling a bit at school. I often send home a few sums or an extra book to read. Sam never does this work. She says that she and her new father sit and watch television. Now you tell me if he really loves her wouldn’t he help her with her schoolwork?
When I see
him in the afternoons then I feel like giving him a smack. They must just
cut off his



Angela

“She looks a bit young if you ask me.” “Angela is very heart sore. There is some shortcoming. I am not quite sure what, but I will see what I can do. Angela is a beautiful girl with green eyes. She was always a very quiet child and works well. She is a very secretive child, always closes her work and does not enjoy group work. I have to chase her out of the class during intervals, she does not play with the other children and enjoys playing house-house with her dolls. I am always telling her that she is too big to play with dolls. Angela sometimes looks like she is in a dream world. When I told this to her father he said that I should rather concentrate on Angela’s school work. What do I do in this case, she does well in her school work, but I can see that she is unhappy. Maybe she just misses her mother.”

APPENDIX 5

CHAPTER 5 - TRANSLATIONS

Page 111

“The people know what is happening at the school. If they know you nothing will happen to you”.

.....



“The guys here will just take your bag and then walk past you tomorrow, be very careful teacher Sakeena.”



Page 114

..... “Yes, it is heartsore that the flowers are perishing, but we are trying to keep the water account as low as possible”

Page 115

..... “The funny thing is that a few days later the thieves come back to school, this time they sell the stuff back to us. What can we do, it is very expensive at the shops and that is why we buy it.”



Page 116

..... “If we don’t joke about these things we’ll all go mad.”

“I am going to (swear word) teacher.”



.....“The administrative work tires me out,

..... It is difficult if you are a women,
the men think that they are still in charge, that is why I will always try my best to include
everyone in the decisions that I make, I would like to gain their respect. Not everyone
understands, some of them think only that if you are the HOD then you get more money,
I applied for this post for ten years and it only came through last year.



Page 120

..... “Sometimes when things are going badly, then I will play with the children, we will sing together and tell a few jokes and in this way I forget about my problems.”

..... “God keeps me going, He gives me the strength to do this work.”



5.5.2 Mrs. Sea’s general attitude towards barriers to learning

..... “There was always a child that needed some extra help with their work.”

..... “Yes, children are struggling with their schoolwork, but they are experiencing problems at home so when they come to school they cannot cope with their schoolwork because of the type of problems they are dealing with.”

..... “..... but what can I do?”

Page 121



“Unfortunately at Whaleside we struggle to get the parents involved, many of the educators need training in OBE and the support services have their own problems to contend with.”

..... “I had to read a lot to get a broad outline of what I had to do. Guidelines were sketchy, while other educators were hesitant to apply this new curriculum. As department head I have to stay abreast with new developments. It is not easy everyday, because I have to do everything myself, but at the same time I find it to be challenging.

I now know that I have to help every child” **Page 122**

5.5.3 Mrs. Sea’s concerns and reservations

“I often struggle with OBE, but I must be confident, because I have to train the other educators. I get so mad when the department keeps on changing things and they don’t even send us useful guidelines to work from. Who helps me, nobody. Now I just do my own thing – but so far things are okay, the inspector is happy with our work. There is so much work, the learner and educator must have a portfolio. The range statements, performance indicators and all the outcomes sometimes confuse us. OBE says that we must give the children less tests, I agree, but now I must give homework and many of the children do not do it, or their parents don’t have time because they come home late. Listen to this, some parents just do the homework themselves. I can immediately see that the handwriting is different. I do not think that the department took these realities into consideration, they only think about the rich.”

“I love them very, very, very much, but there are some things that they do that I just cannot stand. The children love to touch my clothes, ‘Ooh teacher has a beautiful pants on, that is a stunning shirt.’ Their hands are dirty, ...

..... When I sit at my table they want to comb my hair, put makeup on my face with their dirty nails and dirty hands (Mrs. Sea shakes her head). I am a bad person to have these thoughts.” **Page 123**

Many of these children’s parents did not complete high school. Many of them are of the opinion that we must raise their children and solve their children’s problems. When a student struggles with some work, I send the student home with some extra homework with a note, the parents do nothing about it. They think that teachers get paid and that we are suppose to struggle. What does bother me, is when I can help and the parents just wont co-operate. As you know I arranged that Jackson, Allen and Simon be assessed. I spoke to the principal and he suggested that I get the parents in and explain the process to them. Jackson and Allen’s parents just said no, and said that there was nothing wrong with their children and that I was a bad teacher who hit their child.

Luckily Simon’s parents gave permission. What must I do with Jackson and Allen.

Jackson cannot repeat grade 3 again, the school will put him over to grade 4 and there he’ll be another teacher’s problem. I can still work with these children, but the parents This is how they speak to the principal when they are called in, ‘My child naughty? Never. I have no problems at home. It is probably the teacher that cannot teach properly. My child told me that he did nothing and I believe him’. It is another story when we get outside and the principal is gone. The parents threaten me and swear at me.”

Personally I know I am too attached to these children. I know them since grade1. I am like their mother and that is not good for them and me, because I sometimes get too

emotionally involved. I baby them too much, they just need lots of love, they don't often get any attention at home, especially when their mothers and fathers fight. This school with all its problems gets me down, I know that things will not change, because **Page124** the community won't change. There are things that are taking place here that I have never heard of before (she whispers) like child abuse. One is not allowed to talk about these things, but we must educate our children, I want to go on a course about child abuse because I know nothing (A long silence follows).

..... Some nights I cry, I am making myself sick.

My doctor says that my hernia is getting more serious because of my stress levels.



“Every morning I get that smell. The neighbours make a fire in a metal drum, the smell goes in my nose, my clothes, my food, I hate it.

..... “The principal always takes the side of the parents, and the governing body just wants to write out warning letters. Parents sue the schools quickly if a person makes accusations, says that the parents are bad, they say that the law is on their side.”

“I think that my biggest fear is that I will contract Tuberculosis or AIDS from one of these children (pause). The parents tell us nothing. What if I infect my family? I have to

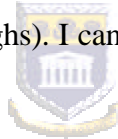
be alert. I push the children away if they cough in front of me, I use surgical gloves if they fall and I must clean the wound. **Page 125**

..... “I do not allow my own children to go out alone.

..... “No girlfriends and boyfriends, oh no. They know that I will go on like a mad person if they come home with a bad report.

..... “Respect and discipline, that is very important, my children know that if they are rude I will smack them. They know I do not tolerate rude children.

..... “My husband often tell me that I am not fair and that our children are good children and that I must take a chill pill (she laughs). I can’t help it, the school has made me hard.



5.6 Meeting the learners



Page 126

..... *“Rene what are you doing?”*

..... *“Keep quiet, get out of my class, you are very (swear word) rude.”*

..... *“Teacher just see what Duane is doing, teacher Robert has my pencil, Teacher just come and see this,” “I am going to tell Teacher now”.*

Page 127

..... *“Teacher is this right?”*

“Teacher look at my picture,” “Teacher mark my work.”

school school

..... *“My uncle stabbed that 28 (gang member), my father said that they killed that man, my brothers eye was swollen.”*

“Yoh, teacher, they fought like this outside our house, one man gave another an uppercut like this (child acts out fight scene).”



Page 128

..... *“What must I do with the stick?”*

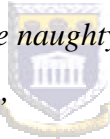
..... *“Teacher, you must hit us with the stick when we do not listen.”*

..... *“Teacher has beautiful clothes,”*

..... *“Please keep quiet!”*

..... *“Teacher you must hit us, we are naughty.”*

“Yoh, when my mother screams, I jump”



“No, when my mother screams the dogs bark ha ha”

“My mother shouts the loudest, you can hear her at the end of the street

5.7 A day in the life of Mrs. Sea

Page 129.....“Every morning I take a good look at their faces. Who looks like they did not eat last night, or who looks abit sick, or who was crying last night.

“I must also listen carefully, because all the stories come out about the events at home and if things are going good or bad.



..... “You must know Teacher, I do not do this every day, oh no. I enjoy my cup of tea during break, no students, just peace and quiet.”

solar system

“The children really enjoyed the planetarium so much so I decided to do a lesson about it. I had to buy the cellophane, pritt, scissors, colour paper myself because the school has nothing. We teachers get paid such a little, and now we must still buy our own stationery.

..... “Remember it sounds a little, but 43 scissors and enough pritt for 43 children, cellophane and colour paper for 43 children costs a lot of money. Luckily all the Grade 3 educators work well together, we share all our resources, when I am done with the scissors I quickly send it to Mrs. Adams class.”



..... “Who hit Melissa?”

..... “Teacher she sat on my seat.” “We do not hit each other, oh no. Tell her nicely that you are sorry, come now.”

‘solar system’

‘solar system’

..... “Settle down now, Liezel! I am raising my hand and when I lower it everyone must be quiet,”

..... “Teacher I want to go to the toilet.” **Page 131**

..... “I also want to go to the toilet.”

..... “If one child decides to go to the toilet, then everyone wants to go to the toilet,.....But if I say no that is when they stand and dance and put their hands on their private parts,

..... “I have eyes at the back of my head, I can see what you are doing.”



“Simon, I am going to hit you young man!”

..... “Who’s eyes are not on my hand? Come let’s all clean up.

..... “Please help Teacher, I am asking you nicely then we all can go home

..... “Bring all my pencils, crayons, pritt and scissors, please.

..... “Shame, they do not have toys at home and they often return it.



Mrs. Sea says, “If I look at the whole class then I must say that most of the children have problems with Mathematics and reading. We all know that if you struggle to read then you will struggle with your Mathematics. They are progressing well in English, but like many people they think in Afrikaans and they then write in English.”

“I must say that many of them are just lazy, but there is a handful that maybe has problems at home, or they are not healthy, or they have a problem with reading and Mathematics.”

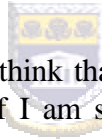
“Sometimes I think that I am a bad educator, but the

children do not do their work, nobody helps them when they struggle, I cannot spend too much time on one task. Their attention, well you know, many of them rather want to be outside. I try, I do revision, I give extra classes after school, but if they do not practice their sums or read at home, then they will not progress with their school work.”

Mrs. Sea often makes diagnosis herself. “If I must wait for the school clinic then I will wait the whole year. Sometimes it is very easy, like in the case of Melanie, Paul and Stephen.”

“Sometimes I feel that I must just solve the problem myself, like they say the wheels of bureaucracy turn slowly. I cannot wait for a year while the child is on the waiting list. What happens to those children that I cannot help, they suffer, they must just stay on the waiting list.”

“I must be honest, we never have time to sit and analyse each and every child, usually it is those children that are very naughty that get our attention, then I ask myself, ‘is there maybe something else wrong with the child?’ We just recently started a teacher support team, we are struggling, but we will get there.”



“There is nothing specific that I do if I think that there is something wrong with a child. I’m like Sherlock Holmes sometimes, if I am suspicious then I must keep my ears and eyes open.”

“The parents are too ashamed to tell me that something is wrong, a few weeks later I get to hear from the neighbours that this or that is going on at the home. Often it is the grandmother or aunt that quietly comes to tell me what the problem is.”

I have
been teaching for so many years that often I just know that a child has a problem. Not
everybody thinks that way, though.

“That child needs a good hiding that will bring him right.”

*“We must send that child away,” says Mrs.
Sea. “If you just look at him or talk to him, then you will see that he is disturbed...”*



Simon

He still plays with the nursery school children during interval, he cannot socialise with children his own age.”

“If you go through his Mathematics portfolio you will find that he gets many of his sums incorrect and he draws on many of his tasks. Simon still counts on his fingers when he does his sums.

If he does not start to work hard he will spend another year in my class. I can often see that he does not understand the work. I sit with him and a few other children, I explain the work 10 times over and he still gets the sums incorrect.

I think that there is something wrong with his brain.

This is now the case with Simon. He does not read he enjoys paging through books and looking at pictures more. His written work is just as weak: he struggles to hold his pencil, he will write one or two words and when I look away he starts to draw.”

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“I should be reporting this type of person to the police,”



Francis

“Francis lives with his mother who does not spend much time with him. Francis often does not do his homework, hates to write, but if I give him some sums to do then he is very happy.

He does not notice the other children. Christopher, Allen en Ashley call him ‘fettie’ and they often bully him. Francis never complains, he just walks away from them.”

Melanie

“I struggle when it comes to Melanie. She started stuttering last year after her mother got married. She was very close to her father who passed away after having a heart attack.

but if she must talk she works herself up and becomes so anxious that the words just cannot come out. I find it strange that Melanie only stutters when she must talk in front of the class. If I talk to her alone, she does not stutter.

I am not sure if this is right, but I no longer ask Melanie to speak in front of the class.

I think that her mother’s new husband is abit strict and Melanie is scared of him. I must still find out about that story.



Deidre

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“Your father is a

“It takes a lot of work to look after a child. I admire Deidre’s mother who also works on a Saturday and Sunday so that she can afford keep Deidre in school.”

Robin

“The poor child’s parents are separating since she was in grade 1” Really. I remember when she was in grade 1 how I listened to Robin’s mother, wiped away her tears and encouraged her to leave her husband. Three years down the line and I sat listening again to Robin’s mother (with an ugly blue eye). I do not feel sorry for these types of women.

In any case in July Robin told me that she and her mother now live with her grandmother. I watched this poor child for tree years and saw what this did to her. Her parents’ problems have affected her, I was never sure if Robin was going to come to school in a happy or sad mood. One day happy and then one day sad. One of the other parents told me that Robin’s parents were always fighting and that her father often left them, but would return a few days later. This is how I understand things; Robin probably watched all of this. So when Robin was sad I knew that her parents were probably fighting and if she came to school happy then I knew that her father had probably returned home.



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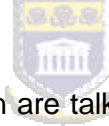
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“She comes to school all dirty, uses obscenities, runs around while I’m teaching and only wants to play with children who are neat.” Mrs. Sea explains. Her hair is my ever end, it looks like a real bush. I bought a comb for her and often brush her hair in the morning.

The poor child’s schoolwork is untidy and disorganised. Linda steals the other children’s stuff, like their hair pom poms, or a lucky packet ring. So every afternoon I have to go through Linda’s bag and every afternoon she swears that she did not take anything and often I find things that belong to other students.”

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Helen



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I called Helen in during interval and innocently asked her about the photos. I did not want to scare her. The things she told me almost made me sick. She told me that this man took photos of her in her underwear. I immediately called her parents; they did not want to believe me (she shakes her head). I did not know what to do. I then called the social worker. The social worker came to school and said that she would investigate the case and that was the last that I heard about the matter. That was three week ago.”

Jackson

“Jackson is one child whom I am struggling with. He failed both grades 2 and 3. He struggles with his reading and does not enjoy writing. He is the oldest and strongest in the class; many of the children is scared of him. If Jackson does not get his way, then he hurts the other children. I have called in his parents many times; all they said was that I must hit Jackson. If Jackson fails again then I must place him in grade 4 and there he will be another teacher’s problem. You know that the department says that a child can no longer repeat a grade twice. Jackson is clever, he is just not in the mood for school. The other children do his schoolwork for him, if you look at his portfolio you will see three or four different handwritings. He is afraid of me, thank God, or else he would tell me a thing or two.

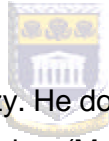
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I assumed that Jackson was bullying them, but then Quinton told me (silence Mrs. Sea looks visibly distraught) that Jackson touched his private (silence) you know what I am talking about. I contacted Jackson’s parents immediately, but they refused to help. I then phoned Jackson’s aunt who also lives with them. The aunt was very embarrassed, but told me that Jackson’s brothers often brought girls home and that Jackson would sit with them and chat to them and God alone knows what other things they did.

I then called in Quinton’s parents and told them that they should not allow Quinton to go home with Jackson. They were shocked; I made up a story that Jackson was a bit naughty and a bad influence on Quinton. Miss, you must understand I had to tell the lie, because Jackson’s parents can sue me. You read almost everyday in the newspaper about parents who sue the school and win. I cannot afford to lose my job.”

Allan

“God, this child comes from a good family. His father works very hard, he sells fruit and vegetables and works until late in the evening. Allan’s mother is gone; I do not know about it. Allan says that his mother is dead, I don’t think that’s the truth. His granny, who is over seventy, looks after him. Allan does not listen to her and comes and goes as he pleases. He never goes directly home after school. He knows that his father only gets home at 10, so he walks around the whole evening.



“Allan is a clever child, but he is very lazy. He does not do his work and only works when I threaten to tell his father. You see teacher (Mrs. Sea whispers) Allan’s father has a bit of a temper and when he starts hitting Allan then his granny has to call the neighbours to get Allan’s father off him. Now, do you understand? That is why I do not want to call his father every time, but sometimes I get desperate. I do not want Allan to sit in my class again next year.”

Enver

"I will not allow Enver to become a rotten apple as well. He is a member of Christopher and Jackson's gang, though only during interval. He is a wonderful boy who always tries his best. His schoolwork has been improving since I spoke to his parents. Now and then I send home some extra schoolwork.

Oh no (sighs) The problem is this: Ashley and Christopher easily influence Enver and, before you know it, he too is in trouble. Then Enver just tells me that he no longer wants to be naughty. I will ensure that he comes right. You see, Enver's brother is the leader of a gang. His parents struggled with his brother and I heard that they eventually threw him out of the house. Now Ashley, Christopher, Jackson and Allen think that Enver is so cool because his brother is a gangster.

Do you understand now? I put Enver next to Francis and a few girls. The girls hate it when the boys come near their tables, so I know that they will complain if Jackson or Christopher comes to Enver's table. Do you see teacher? I need to be sharp otherwise they will take over my class. The girls help him with his homework, Francis is good for him because they help each other, Francis helps him with his Mathematics and Enver helps Francis with his English."

Christopher

Everyday Christopher does something naughty.

“If there is one child who needs to go to a school for delinquents, then it is Christopher. When I threaten the children with this story they then only behave for a day.

I must admit, that I am often at my wits end when it comes to Christopher. I talk and talk and talk, but nothing helps. I think that there is something wrong with his brain, because he still struggles with grade 2 Mathematics. He and Jackson used to sit with Francis. They used to copy all of Francis's work. Can you believe it? I thought to myself, 'This is very strange; suddenly they are getting all their sums right. Now and then I give Francis grade 4 Mathematics to work on. Now these two naughty boys do not listen to me and they ended up copying Francis grade 4 work instead of working on their own sums. This is how I caught them out. Now Christopher and Jackson sit right here under my nose so that I can keep an eye on them. Like Jackson, Christopher is also going to fail. I do not want him in my class. I wish the principal would just expel the lot of them. Christopher's poor mother is such a soft-hearted person. She goes to church regularly and works hard just to keep them going. She cried bitterly when the principal called her in and told her that Christopher was one of the children who had stolen things from the tuck shop.

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Christopher stole Nawaal's pen or he kicked Dalme.

APPENDIX 6

CHAPTER 6 - TRANSLATIONS



Page 133

Mrs. Sea says, “If I look at the whole class then I must say that most of the children have problems with Mathematics and reading. We all know that if you struggle to read then you will struggle with your Mathematics. They are progressing well in English, but like many people they think in Afrikaans and they then write in English.”

Page 134

“I must say that many of them are just lazy, but there is a handful that maybe has problems at home, or they are not healthy, or they have a problem with reading and Mathematics.”

“Sometimes I think that I am a bad educator, but the children do not do their work, nobody helps them when they struggle, I cannot spend too much time on one task. Their attention, well you know, many of them rather want to be outside. I try, I do revision, I give extra classes after school, but if they do not practice their sums or read at home, then they will not progress with their school work.”

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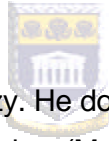
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Page 146

“You have to be sharp, otherwise these children will drive you insane. So the things that I do in class are things that I picked up here and there.

Let me teach you something: you must shout as little as possible, you are still young, you must look after your voice. If you shout too much then the children will get used to it. That is why many of the teachers go on like mad people, they shout and shout and shout (she whispers). I just give one loud shout and the children jump and then there is silence (she laughs) I saw you jump as well.”

“The music teacher at the school where I previously taught spoke very little. When she hit on the tambourine the children knew that they had to sit on the mat. When she used the triangle they knew that they had to take out their books. In this way I also learnt.”

‘I do some of the things because I am tired. You will still see, by ten o’ clock my throat is dry and I have a headache. I say to them, ‘I am raising my hand and when I lower my hand I want everyone to be quiet. Then I think to myself, ‘Thank God, silence for a few a minutes.’ **Page 147**


‘I learnt quickly how to get all the children involved so that I do not have to repeat myself over and over again. When we are busy with a task then I explain to them what they must do. I then get a learner to repeat the instructions. The children enjoy this tremendously as you have seen. They jump up and climb over each other to get chosen. What they don’t know is that in this way I ensure that they are listening.



‘The children are still small, they are still learning how to be quiet and how to pay attention. It is now my task to drill these kinds of things into them. You must remember it is not what you say, but how you say it. I know that if I reprimand Christopher, then I am very strict, my face shows it and my voice. When my eyes go big and I raise my voice, the children know that I am not fooling around. I am very, very, very strict when it comes to discipline. If I had to give advice to any teacher, I would tell them that they must know their children well. If you know them inside out and outside in then you will always know whom are the ones making a noise, who are the ones who are going to forget to write their names on their tasks (she laughs) and who needs some extra help. You don’t have to worry. These things come with experience, you will quickly pick it up.

“Discipline is something we at Whaleside are all struggling with. The children are no longer scared of the principal, so when I say, ‘I am going to send you to the office’ the children just look at me and I know they are thinking, ‘What is the big deal?’” **Page148**

“I first ask both the child and parents about their household situation or I read through books to find strategies that will help.”

 “The work goes in by the one ear and out by the other, that is why I try to do revision everyday. I do it quickly, chop, chop, then it is done.

“Some children get difficult questions because they are coping, while others get easier questions because they are not coping with their work.”

“I have to start everyday in this way so that the children feel good about themselves and start the day on a happy note.”

“Congratulations, very good, brilliant, my
darling, my angel.”

‘Very good’, you
must look into their eyes so that they know that you mean what you are saying. These
children need to know that I care and I am proud of them.



Page 150

“The first thing that I do with these children is, ‘I lay down the law, this is my classroom, you will listen to me. If you are going to be rude, get out of my class.’



“If Candice and Enver are sitting quietly then I know that they are being naughty and I say, ‘I have eyes behind my head, I can see what you are doing’. Most of the time the children are not doing anything, but they will think twice before doing anything naughty because they know that their teacher sees everything.”

“You must know teacher, they’re a new generation of children, no respect, rude, swearing and fighting. Where do they learn these things? At home, from mom and dad who have no respect for each other, they also swear and fight with each other. They do not learn about discipline at home. Children are raised by the grandmothers, aunts or neighbours, or there are just too many people living in the same home. Children like Ashley, Enver, Christopher, Allan and Jackson, I feel sorry for them. If I am not strict with them, then they will turn out to be Whaleside’s new gangsters. I mean they are starting now already.

Page 151

“The children know, ‘No swearing and no fighting, we must respect and help one another. No lying, stealing, because God does not love children that lie or steal.

“I will often stop a lesson if they tease Melanie and Stephen. I tell them, “We must respect each other, you are hurting Melanie and Stephen’s feelings. I then see to it that those culprits apologise to Melanie and Stephen in front of the whole class. They must learn about what is right and wrong.

“I will always talk about respect and good manners, like I did today.”



“Who threw the bread on the floor? If that person does not come to the front now, then the whole class is going to get a hiding.”

‘It was also Jason.’

“Ooh, they going to get a nice hiding now.”

Page 152

“Right, sit! I want to tell you something. If you are going to mess with food like this then God will punish you, he will throw you in the fire and you will burn there.”

*“Take
out your books, we are going to work now.”*

“Children like Jackson, Allan and Ashley, I know I must show them who the boss is . If they first start bullying the others, then I write their names on the page on the door. They know that if their names are on this page then they are going to get a hiding.”



“There were days where Christopher was just out of hand. On one occasion he spat in Francis’s face and kicked him in his stomach, just because Francis refused to lend him some koki’s. I sent him to the office immediately and we sent home a letter to his mother. I also gave him a good hiding on his behind, not in front of the whole class. Oh no I won’t do that to the children. I do not believe in corporal punishment, but Christopher really gets me down.”

“The children know that if there is one thing that I hate then it is untidiness. Linda, Helen and Terry decided one interval that they were going to spit in each other’s milk. I gave all three of them a good shake They got such a fright and Terry started crying. They will never do that again.”

Page 153

“Children will be children. Sometimes they run around, jump over the chairs and jump on each other. I just say, ‘One, two, three’ and the busy bunch knows that they need to settle down. I cannot cope with Linda’s tantrums and her swearing. I taught a lesson on this already, I told everyone that God gets very upset if we speak in an ugly manner to one another. Now if Linda swears I send her out of the class, but if it gets out of hand then I hit her on her hands.



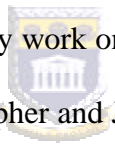
“I don’t allow gangster-like behaviour in my class, oh no. They know that if they start with their nonsense I will make them stand in a corner.

“We count how many prophets there are and we write new vocabulary on the board. OBE says that you must not only teach lifeskills, you must also teach a bit of maths and languages. I let

the children write the new words on the board themselves, they feel so big when they do it themselves and in this manner they learn as well. **Page 154**

“I enjoy starting the day off with a lesson from the Bible. In this way I know that God is looking after me and the children, and will give me the strength to cope. The Whaleside community is regular church goers. The children go regularly to Bible school and enjoy the morning’s story. The children know that these kinds of things are taking place in their homes and in their community. They must know that these things are wrong and that God will punish them.”

“These children struggle to concentrate in the morning, they can only work once they have eaten something. There are also those naughty boys like Christopher and Jackson who only arrive at school after interval.”



Page 155

“Abigail copied from me, Luallen kicked me, Teacher I
want to go to the toilet.



‘5, 4, 3, teacher says

my work is good, 3,2,1 teacher is worried about my work’.

Page 156

'Sing along time'.



Which number did I leave out 2, 4, _, 8, 10 now write the number on your body

Now let's count in tens, clap your hands as you count



Page 158

everyday

“I will remind them

“Their mothers’ and fathers’ speak to one another in an ugly manner

and act out at home. The children see this and they copy it. I struggle to get them to say, 'Thank you,' 'Excuse me' and 'Good morning,' because their parents don't do it.

I hate it when the bell rings and they all run out with their mouths stuffed with bread.

They stuff their mouths, run around and talk with their mouths full of food. **Page 159**

“Close your mouth when you eat.”

- “Jason ask Francis nicely if you can borrow his pencil. Repeat after me, may I borrow your pencil, please.”
- “Candice, go and fetch a tissue from my table. Remember, girls always keep themselves neat and tidy.”
- “What do we say when teacher hands out the bread? “We say, ‘Thank you teacher.’”



“I always tell them that they must first neaten up their tables before they come and sit on the mat.”

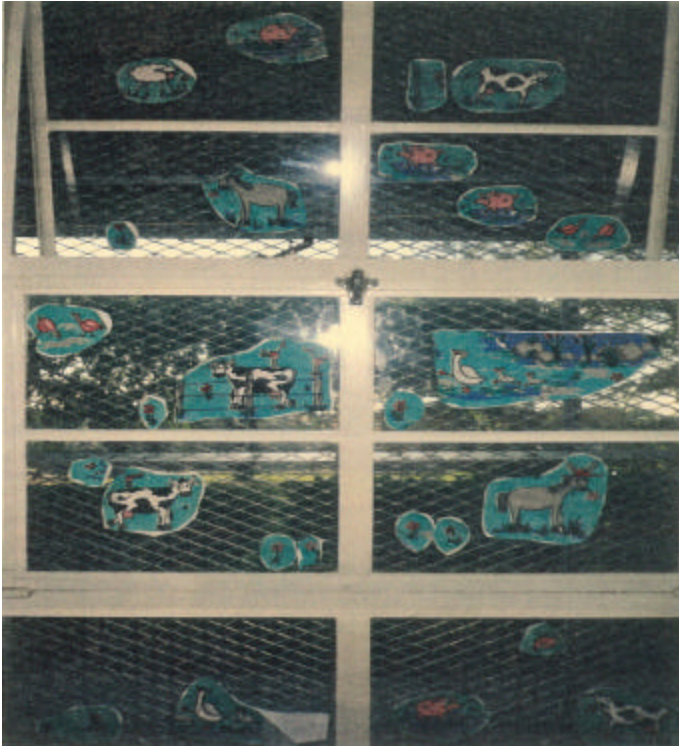
Page 160

‘love, or my darling.’

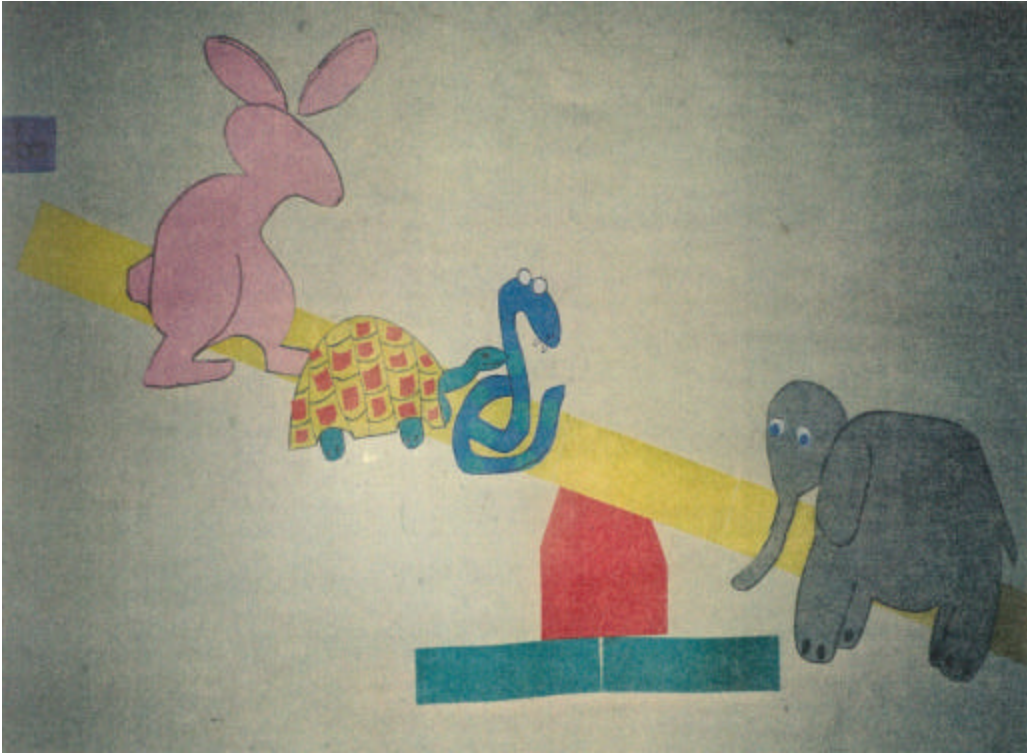
“Very good, that is pretty”



APPENDIX 7
PHOTOGRAPHS



Poster of an abacus that Mrs. Sea designed



Below, ? posters learners created on the parts of the house and the healthy food they eat





? Bible corner in the classroom with religious story books



toy cars, trucks and airplanes are used to teach learners about transport

