

**MENTORING BY SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATORS AS
A POSSIBLE SOLUTION FOR THE PROBLEMS
EXPERIENCED BY MAINSTREAM EDUCATORS
IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Tseko Samuel Lefuo, hereby declare that this mini-dissertation, titled

**MENTORING BY SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATORS AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION
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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

is my own work, that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this research project was not previously submitted by me for a degree at any other university or institution.

Signed:


T.S. LEFUO

Date: 31 January 2003

SUMMARY

This research study presents an investigation into mentoring by special needs educators as a possible solution for the problems experienced by mainstream educators in inclusive education.

The methodology employed in this investigation include a literature study on the possible problems experienced by educators in the context of inclusive education and the support special needs educators might offer in this regard. It also embraces mentoring as a possible solution for problems experienced by mainstream educators in inclusive education. A qualitative opinion survey among mainstream educators, special needs educators and education officials was undertaken by means of qualitative open-ended interviews among 16 respondents in the Mangaung township area.

The results of the survey were finally interpreted in terms of three research questions pertaining to the problem being investigated. The major conclusions the researcher has made was that there are many problems related to the implementation of inclusive education and that a mentoring system in which special needs educators serve as mentors for mainstream educators is a viable option for solving or easing these problems. Finally, a number of recommendations were formulated for a variety of stakeholders in inclusive education.

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Mentoring
2. Mentor
3. Mentee
4. Special needs education
5. Inclusive education
6. Mainstream education
7. Support services
8. Paradigm shift
9. National Department of Education
10. Free State Department of Education

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In line with current international trends, South African education is moving away from special education for learners with special educational needs (LSEN) towards a policy of inclusion. This is reflected in national education policy developments since 1994. In South Africa, the new constitution emphasizes respect for the rights of all, with particular emphasis on the recognition of diversity. This implies an inclusive approach to education in the sense that all learners are entitled to equal and appropriate education. The new curriculum with its outcomes-based approach is well suited for inclusion. However, in order to be effective, schools, classrooms and educators need to be prepared to change and therefore also need to be supported in doing so (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht, 1999: 7).

The National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training and the National Committee for Education and Support Services (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 1999: 8) state that there has never been a formal exclusion policy in South African schools, except within the separate education system for whites which existed until the end of apartheid era. Learners with a wide variety of special education needs were, and are, to be found in many mainstream South African classrooms. The difference now is that these learners are recognized as having the right to access the curriculum just like all other learners as well as the right to a curriculum which is appropriate to their learning needs. This has implications for the nature of schools and classroom environments, the nature of the curriculum and the roles of educators, parents and the communities in the education of all learners.

According to the Education White Paper No. 6 (DoE, 2001: 29) special needs educators can be classified into two categories, namely district based and institution based special needs educators. The district based special needs educators

comprise staff from provincial, district, regional and head offices. On the other hand, special needs educators at special and mainstream schools are viewed as being institution-based. The primary function of district support teams is to evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness, suggest modifications as well as to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support services. These services are to support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Where appropriate, these teams need to be strengthened by expertise from the local community, district support teams and higher education institutions. District support teams also need to provide the full range of education support services to these institution-based support teams (see 2.5.1 and 2.5.2).

As far as educators at the schools are concerned, it is usually assumed that they need to acquire extra knowledge and different skills in order to facilitate the process of inclusion. Changes in educator education at both initial and in-service levels have tended to reinforce this. It is difficult, however, to specify what the new knowledge or the new skills might be that any professional working in a new area would be expected to obtain. Hence the existence of arguments against inclusion. For example, it is suggested by some stakeholders that inclusive education should be postponed until educators have been properly trained. These critics, according to Oliver (1996:87), can be seen as rationalisations who want to preserve the *status quo* rather than starting genuine concerns about inabilities of educators to cope with a whole range of new demands.

At institutional level, the assessment of learners with special educational needs will be based on the diagnosis of some specific impairment, which restricts their ability to participate fully in the educational opportunities that are generally available. It is therefore important that *all* educators are aware of the nature of such impairments (Beveridge, 1993: 36). At district and institutional level, the role of special needs educators is to give support to educators in mainstream schools. Many educators in mainstream schools feel that they do not have sufficient training and support to meet many of the challenges presented by children with special educational needs in their classes. They tend to lack confidence in their ability to provide programmes of study that are appropriately differentiated. Many educators find themselves working in

school situations where they regularly teach large classes with little or no internal special needs support, and where external resources are rarely available. Facing the task of meeting a wide range of needs in isolation can lead to acute stress or dissatisfaction among capable educators (Upton & Varma, 1996: 185).

One of the most important roles of the special needs educator is to prepare educators for inclusive education as far as curriculum issues are concerned. According to Wade (2000: 16) a course that has been developed for educator education at the University of Utah addresses issues of diversity and inclusive education. It covers not only debates related to inclusive education, but also attitudes, curricula, teaching approaches and assessment practices that foster learning for all students, irrespective of what their specific impairments may be. The course also examines collaborative partnerships that can provide the knowledge and resources necessary to the success of inclusion efforts and may therefore shed light on the issues special needs educators need to convey to mainstream educators.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem investigated in this study includes the problems experienced by mainstream educators in a system of inclusive education and mentoring as a possible solution for these problems.

1.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

According to the Education White Paper No. 6 (DoE, 2001 :17) inclusion is about recognizing and respecting the differences among all learners; building on their similarities; as well as 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 actors, with the emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies that will be to the benefit of all learners. The afore-mentioned document also focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs. The focus is on the adaptation of and support systems available in

the classroom. The purpose of the study is therefore to improve the support provided to the learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of the learning needs can be met in a system of inclusive education.

1.4 THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The *aim* of the study was to investigate, by means of a literature study and an empirical investigation, the feasibility of mentoring of mainstream educators by special needs educators as a possible solution for the problems experienced by mainstream educators in the context of inclusive education. In order to obtain this research aim, the following objectives were identified for this investigation:

- To investigate the concepts inclusive education and mentoring.
- To investigate the possible support special needs educators could offer to mainstream educators in an inclusive education system.
- To investigate the problems experienced by mainstream educators in the context of inclusive education.
- To investigate mentoring as a possible solution for the problems experienced by mainstream educators in the context of inclusive education.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that were investigated in this study include the following:

- What is inclusive education?
- What is mentoring?

- What support could special needs educators offer to mainstream educators in a system of inclusive education?
- What advantages and problems do mainstream educators usually experience in or foresee within a system of inclusive education?
- Could the mentoring of mainstream educators by special needs educators in a system of inclusive education help to solve the problems experienced by these educators?

The first two questions above were answered by means of the literature studies in Chapters 1 and 2 of this report while the remaining three were answered by means of both the afore-mentioned literature studies in Chapters 1 and 2 and the empirical study discussed in Chapter 4 of this report.

1.6 DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH

The target population for this research project consisted of special needs educators, mainstream educators and Department of Education officials, who reside in the Mangaung township area occupied by a historically disadvantaged community. Since the investigation focused on the mentoring of mainstream educators by special needs educators as a possible solution for the problems experienced by these educators in an inclusive education system, the emphasis in this investigation was on *special needs education* and *inclusive education*, both of which form part of the field of the Psychology of Education. However, it should also be taken into account that mentoring is part of Human Resource Management in education.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Literature studies

A literature study on the possible problems experienced by educators in the context of inclusive education and the support special needs educators could offer in this regard was performed in Chapter 2 of this report. Another literature study on mentoring as a possible solution for the problems experienced by educators in inclusive education, was also performed in Chapter 3. The results of the literature studies eventually provided the background for the empirical investigation that followed.

1.7.2 A qualitative interview opinion survey

A qualitative interview opinion survey was performed among a sample of special needs educators, mainstream educators and Department of Education officials. The interviews performed contained open-ended questions aimed at obtaining an in-depth understanding of the way these educators either experienced inclusive education or the problems or advantages they foresaw with the implementation of such a system of education as well as a mentoring system in this regard.

1.7.2.1 The selection of the subjects

Due to financial constraints, limited accessibility of subjects to the researcher and the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher identified a limited number of 16 subjects who can be categorised as follows (see 4.7):

- Five educators from a special school in the Mangaung township area;
- Five educators from a mainstream secondary school in the Mangaung township area;
- Four educators from a mainstream primary school in the Mangaung township

area; and

- Two Department of Education officials.

Care was therefore taken to select subjects that came from primary and secondary mainstream schools as well as from a special school. Thus the sampling used in this investigation can be typified as *purposeful and convenience sampling* (cf. McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 175-176; 400-401; see 4.7).

1.7.2.2 Analysis, interpretation and reporting of the data

The interviews performed were audiotaped and transcribed and the transcripts were coded in order to look for common patterns of problems and opinions. The results of this investigation are also reported in Chapter 4 of this report in the form of detailed descriptions of some of the interviews, followed by an identification of typical opinions expressed by the subjects. These results were finally interpreted in an inductive way, and in conjunction with the results of the literature studies in Chapters 2 and 3, in order to formulate conclusions and recommendations that are eventually reported in Chapter 5 of this report (see 4.10, 5.2; and 5.3).

1.7.2.3 Limitations of the research

Because of financial constraints, the research project was mainly performed in the Mangaung township area and was limited to 16 subjects. Whereas this may limit the generalisability (i.e. the *external validity*) of the research, the fact that the method of research was qualitative in nature may serve to increase the *internal validity and reliability* of the research (see 4.9 for a more complete explanation of the validity and reliability of the research).

1.8 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

This research report consists of five chapters of which this is the first one. The

division of chapters is as follows:

- CHAPTER 1:** Orientation
- CHAPTER 2:** Possible problems experienced by educators in the context of inclusive education and the support special needs educators could offer in this regard: A literature study
- CHAPTER 3:** Mentoring as a possible solution for problems experienced by mainstream educators in inclusive education: A literature study
- CHAPTER 4:** A qualitative interview opinion survey among mainstream and special needs educators and officials: Research design and research results
- CHAPTER 5:** Conclusions and recommendations.

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Hornby, 1995) defines the concept *mentor* as follows: A trusted adviser or somebody with little experience in a particular field. The *Reader's Digest Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (Baker, 1998) also defines *mentor* as follows: an experienced and trusted adviser (from the Greek Mentor, adviser of young Telemachus in Homer, *Odyssey* and Fénelon's *Télémaque*; see 3.2.1)

According to the Education White Paper No. 6 (DoE, 2001:16) *inclusive education* acknowledges that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support; it accepts and respects the fact that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which are equally valued and an ordinary part of our human experience; it enables education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners; and it changes attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all

learners (see 2.2).

According to the *Integrated National Disability Strategy* (RSA, 1997:38) *special needs education* acknowledges that not all learners with disabilities have special needs in education as they do not experience learning barriers; that special needs in education exists both in mainstream centres of learning and in special centres of learning; that various stakeholders (for example educators, therapists, psychologists and parents) play important roles in responding to special needs in education; and that special needs in education include support in the form of life skills and independence training, assistive devices, specialised equipment and access to curriculum.

For the purpose of this investigation *mainstream schools* refer to ordinary primary and secondary public schools in South Africa. *Mainstream educators and mainstream learners* therefore refer to the educators and the learners who are attached to ordinary primary and secondary public schools in South Africa. On the other hand, *special needs educators and learners* refer to educators and learners who are attached to *special schools* that only cater for *learners with special educational needs*. However, special needs educators could as well refer to mainstream educators who have undergone training in special needs education and/or are teaching at mainstream schools.

1.10 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter serves as an orientation to this research investigation and the way that this research report has been compiled. It has been explained that the research problem investigated in this project included the problems experienced by mainstream educators in a system of inclusive education and mentoring as a possible solution for these problems. As a background to the research problem it was explained that education authorities in the new democratic South Africa are moving away from segregated special education for learners with special educational needs towards a policy of inclusion of all learners in mainstream schools.

The research aim of the investigation was subsequently explained and a number of objectives in this regard were identified. On the basis of these objectives research questions were formulated and the demarcation of the investigation was explained. It was indicated that, besides literature studies on inclusive education and mentoring respectively, the researcher also employed a qualitative interview opinion survey to investigate the problems that are either experienced or foreseen with the implementation of inclusive education and whether a mentoring system would be a viable solution to these problems or not.

The selection of subjects for this investigation, the method of analysis, interpretation and reporting of the data, as well as the possible limitations of the research were also explained. A division of chapters for this report was provided and the most important concepts included or implied in the research topic were clarified.

The next chapter contains a literature study on problems that could be experienced by mainstream educators in the context of inclusive education as well as the possible support special needs educators might offer in this regard.

CHAPTER 2

POSSIBLE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY EDUCATORS IN THE CONTEXT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND THE SUPPORT SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATORS COULD OFFER IN THIS REGARD: A LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The dramatic changes in South African society in the past few years have affected both general and special education. For this reason Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht (1999:3) emphasise that, because people are attached to their established ways of thinking, dramatic changes in society are often experienced by crises. It is therefore not surprising that the restructuring and redesigning of education, including the movement away from segregated settings for learners with special needs, to the provision of education for all learners in an inclusive and supportive learning environment, have been received with misgiving by some people. An understanding of the context in which the movement towards inclusive education has developed, provides an important opportunity to reframe people's perceptions of these changes.

2.2 WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

The Education White Paper No. 6 (DoE, 2001: 16) defines inclusive education and training as follows:

- Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support.

- Accepting and respecting the fact that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which are equally valued and an ordinary part of human experience.
- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners.
- Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status.
- Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners.
- Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning.
- Empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning.

Inclusive education therefore refers to a broad philosophical and principled position in relation to the educational rights of all children. In South Africa, inclusive education relates to the Bill of Rights that protects all children from discrimination, including those with special needs. It commits educators to creating access to and provision of a process of education which is appropriate to the needs of all children, whatever their origin, background, or circumstances (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 1997:21).

Inclusive education implies the decentralisation of power and the concomitant empowerment of educators; a fundamental reorganisation of the teaching and learning process through innovations like co-operative learning and thematic teaching; and a re-definition of professional relationships within buildings (Kauffman and Hallahan, 1995:222-223). Inclusion means that learners with disabilities are

educated in supported, heterogeneous, age appropriate, natural and student-centred classrooms (Kauffman and Hallahan, 1995:320).

According to Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:18) inclusive education is a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners. Stainback and Stainback (1997:11) also argue that all students, including those with disabilities, should be able to attend their neighbourhood school, which should live up to its responsibility to adapt to the diversity of student needs.

According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997:21) inclusion also refers to an educational policy which must flow from the position of inclusive education. Such a policy must ensure that the full variety of educational needs is optimally accommodated and included in the education system. This may involve different ways of meeting special needs. The emphasis falls on the system meeting the needs of the child as normally and inclusively as possible, rather than the child having to be separated or excluded to suit the needs of the system.

The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (DoE, 1997: vi-vii) describes an inclusive learning environment as a learning environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners, irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning style and language. It is an environment which is free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment and which intentionally tries to facilitate an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and respect. It also respects learners and values them as partners in teaching and learning; the rights of all learners; and enables them to participate fully in a democratic society.

According to the White Paper No. 6 on Special Needs Education (DoE, 2001:17) inclusion involves:

- recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities;

- supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met;
- focusing on teaching and learning actors, with an emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners;
- focusing on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs; and
- the adaptation and support of systems available in the classroom.

2.3 THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FIELD OF SPECIAL NEEDS AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The situation with regard to inclusive education in South Africa has reached an advanced stage with the completion of policy development by the National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training and the National Committee for Education Support Services at the end of 1997 (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 1999:12). Both international and national patterns and trends regarding disability have undergone major shifts which have influenced the movement towards inclusive education in South Africa to a large extent. These shifts centred mainly around the move from a medical discourse to a rights discourse.

According to Fulcher (1989; in Engelbrecht *et al.* 1999:13), there are four main kinds of discourse which have constructed the field of specialised and inclusive education, namely medical, charity, lay and rights discourse:

2.3.1 Medical discourse

According to this type of discourse impairment is linked with disability. The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (RSA, 1997:9) states that the medical model of disability means that organisations for people with disabilities are

usually controlled by non-disabled people who provide services to people with disabilities. The blind and the deaf or those labelled by some other disability are often excluded from regular mainstream schools and such exclusion could result in the perception of such people as inadequate human beings who are unfit to be included in mainstream economic and social life.

2.3.2 Charity discourse

Much of special education in this country has had to do with benevolent humanitarianism. Recipients of special education are viewed as in need of assistance, as objects of pity and eternally dependent on others. As a result they are seen as underachievers and people who are in need of institutional care (Engelbrecht et al., 199:13). What the charity discourse promotes is that people in authority are always the decision makers. The voice of disabled persons is all but erased from the production of knowledge central to disability. The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (RSA, 1997:10) indicates that people with disabilities in South Africa came together in the early eighties to mobilise and organise themselves. Their aim was to build a strong civil movement. Central to the disability rights movement is the assertion of disability as a human right and a development issue. An understanding of disability as a human right means that people with disabilities are equal citizens and should therefore enjoy equal rights and responsibilities.

2.3.3 Lay discourse

This type of discourse relates to prejudice, hate, ignorance, fear and even paternalistic tendencies. Much of the lay discourse has to do with the isolation of people who deviate from a normal physical appearance.

2.3.4 Rights discourse

This type of discourse is committed to extending full citizenship to all people. It stresses equal opportunity, self reliance, independence and wants rather than

needs. *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action* (1994:viii) actually reaffirms the right to education of every individual. The statement reads as follows:

- Every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.
- Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.
- Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.
- Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.

The driving force for inclusive education is thus realized in this resolution that became known as *the Salamanca Statement on Principles and Practice in Special Needs Education* (1994: viii). This statement was endorsed by 92 countries and 25 international organisations.

It is against the above-mentioned background that the new Ministry of Education in South Africa appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee for Education Support Services in 1996 to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa (Engelbrecht *et al.* 1999:12-16).

2.4 POSSIBLE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY EDUCATORS IN THE CONTEXT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.4.1 Redistribution of special education resources in South Africa

According to Human (1992; in Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booysen 1996: 40-42) *redistribution* refers to the creation and redistribution of wealth, or surplus value. The concept includes empowerment. Nevertheless, it is a sobering reality that in the context of a national education budget, future services will have to make do with less money. There probably will not be much surplus wealth to redistribute in this country for some years to come.

Green (1989; in Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booysen, 1996:41) also points out that the resources for special education will be scarce for some time to come. Any available resources are likely to be channelled into separate provision for children with severe handicaps, while the majority of children with special educational needs will remain in the regular classroom.

Donald (1991; in Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booysen, 1996:42) maintains that the current individual referral system remains inadequate and inappropriate because of the huge lack of trained personnel. The same equation applies to special educators, school counsellors, remedial teachers and other professionals who are trained to work with children with special needs.

2.4.2 Stress among educators of learners with special needs

2.4.2.1 Change and stress

Stress is produced when the interaction between a person and an environment is perceived to be so trying or burdensome that it exceeds one's coping resources. In a more basic sense stress is aroused when a person is confronted with an opportunity, a constraint or a demand. An opportunity is a situation in which a person stands to gain additional gratification of his/her significant values or desires, as in a new job assignment or promotion. A constraint, on the other hand, threatens

to block additional gratification and becomes a limitation if, for example, a promotion is denied. A demand threatens to remove a person from a currently gratifying situation such as when one is fired from a job (Greenhaus and Callanan, 1994:222).

According to Upton and Varma (1996:1) changes in educational legislation in England and Wales have affected educators of learners with special educational needs. These have been manifold and profound during the past twenty-five years. Therefore, Holmes and Rahe (1967) and Rahe and Arthur, (1978; both in Upton and Varma 1996: 20) suggest that within the research literature on stress it is clear that change, especially imposed change, is stressful, no matter whether the events surrounding it are perceived as welcome or threatening.

2.4.2.2 Legislation, resources and stress

According to Norwich (1992; in Upton and Varma 1996:2) changes in legislation may carry tensions in their wake, due to essential incompatibility in the underlying principles of the legislation. The market forces implication of the 1988 Education Reform Acts in the United Kingdom demands that mainstream schools pursue high academic standards in an absolute sense. According to Eloff, Engelbrecht and Swart (2000:2) stress is also generally associated with workload, poor learner behaviour and a lack of resources. They also mention the enormous amount of stress that educators may experience due to their efforts to fulfil their increasing obligations. It is therefore evident that various sources of stress are prevalent in the education today.

2.4.2.3 The level of demands on educators

According to Eloff, Engelbrecht and Swart (2000:2) there are various issues to consider when attempting to define the concept *educator stress*. The first is to use the concept in terms of the level of demands made on the educator. Alternatively stated, the term refers to the emotional state rendered by these demands. Secondly, educator stress relates to the inclusion of both negative and positive demands as stress factors and the subsequent positive and negative emotional states that it relates to. Thirdly, it involves the relationship between the educators' perception of a

situation and their perception of their ability to cope with the situation. These issues therefore necessitate a very broad definition of educator stress that conceives of educator stress as a reaction to difficult or excessive demands that needs to be dealt with.

2.4.2.4 Factors associated with educator stress

Work involving responsibility for other people creates a potential for stress as it may heighten expectations of job performance and emotional availability. Further factors include the number of individuals for whom one has responsibility; long hours spent working with learners; diversity among the people with whom one works; resistance; and lack of motivation of co-workers. Stressful situations may occur in a school because of its culture; function; structure; the nature of the management procedures; insufficient training of educators; time pressure; poor working conditions; poor consultation; and communication (Eloff, Engelbrecht and Swart, 2000:2).

Another condition of work that is associated with stress is role ambiguity. Ambiguity often involves a lack of clear and consistent information about duties, tasks, responsibilities and rights. Even though teaching is reported to be a very stressful occupation it is also important to consider that, as schools attempt to create inclusive education, the roles and responsibilities of educators are changing even more (Eloff, Engelbrecht and Swart, 2000:3).

However, it is also important to note that not all educators experience stress. Individuals differ in the manner in which they respond to stress. People interpret and evaluate situations in different ways, depending on their personalities, beliefs, vulnerabilities, past experiences and the resources that are available to them. There seems to be a need for educators and support personnel to be able to recognise stressful situations and to take the necessary steps to manage this effectively, as today's educators have to deal with heterogeneity in their classrooms as never before (Eloff, Engelbrecht and Swart 2000:3).

Eloff, Engelbrecht and Swart (2000:4) also indicate that there is an important shift in professional values for the twenty first century that needs to be taken into account

while researching stress and coping skills of educators in inclusive education. The values underlying the role of professionals are support; sharing of knowledge; dialogue; focus on strength; and a strong emphasis on collaborative planning and decision making.

2.4.2.5 Educators' preparedness for inclusive education

Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2001:213) maintain that, although the expected South African legislation regarding inclusive education represents a major step forward in the transformation and democratisation of the South African education system, it is often asked whether educators in the class are prepared and ready for inclusive education. The concept *preparedness* according to Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2001:213) differs from *prepare* since it indicates how well someone (like an educator) has already been prepared for something that is imminent. It may be translated in this context as the "state of readiness" of an educator for inclusive education. It therefore implies the following question: Have educators been prepared with regard to skills and the cognitive and emotional level for the anticipated implementation of inclusive education?

Hay, Smit and Paulsen's (2001:213) findings on educators' preparedness for inclusive education suggest that a huge effort will have to be made by policy makers and provincial education departments to affect the paradigm shift towards inclusive education. The average educator is apparently neither prepared nor ready to teach learners in inclusive classrooms effectively. However, it is commendable that the authors found that the overwhelming majority of educators were open and willing to learn more about inclusive education.

2.4.3 Educators' attitudes towards inclusive education

Baron and Byrne (1991; in Swart, Pettipher, Engelbrecht, Eloff, Oswald, Ackerman and Prozesky, 2000:2) describe *attitudes* as "... internal representations of various aspects of the social or physical world – representation containing effective reactions to the attitudes object and a wide range of cognitions about it (e.g. thoughts, beliefs,

judgements). Attitudes reflect past experience, shape ongoing behaviour, and serve essential functions for those who hold them.”

According to Swart *et al.* (2000:2) various researchers have found that educators' beliefs and attitudes can often be linked to the more generalized belief system of their society. This can be directly related to the influences and learning experiences provided by one's environment, which shapes attitudes. Therefore, *attitude* has a cognitive (learned) component, an emotional component and a component of observable behaviour. Three independent studies conducted in the Gauteng Province, Somerset West and Pretoria in traditionally black primary schools by Swart *et al.* (2000: 2) revealed the following factors that may have a negative impact on the attitudes of educators towards inclusive education:

2.4.3.1 Inadequate knowledge, skills and training of educators to implement inclusive education

The participants in all studies were of the opinion that they did not possess adequate knowledge and skills to address diversity and teach learners with special educational needs. There appeared to exist a perceived inability to manage diversity, often resulting in feelings of fear and hopelessness. Furthermore, misunderstandings and misperceptions of the concept inclusion also appeared to limit educator's successful implementation of inclusive education.

2.4.3.2 Lack of educational and educator support

A theme that relates strongly with insufficient and inadequate training is the perceived lack of educational and educator support. Educators expressed the need for educator support and support services to assist them with the learners. Closely related to this is their acknowledgement of the importance of collaborative partnerships in implementing inclusive education. For this to be the reality, educators require skills in collaboration, which they apparently do not possess or use.

2.4.3.3 Inadequate provision of facilities, infrastructure and assistive devices

According to the participants (educators) the successful accommodation of learners with special educational needs requires the necessary facilities, infrastructure and assistive devices, which they believed were still lacking.

2.4.3.4 Potential effects of inclusive education on LSEN and other learners in the mainstream

Negative attitudes and labelling can arise from misperception and assumptions about disabilities. Participants expressed concern about the quality of attention provided to the learners with special educational needs (LSEW); the potential emotional and academic effects on such learners; the potential disruptive behaviour; as well as the educational neglect of learners without special educational needs.

2.4.4 Educator efficacy

Soodak and Podell (1998:18) identify two distinct components of educator efficacy: Personal efficacy, namely the belief that an individual can effect changes in his or her students; and teaching efficacy, namely the belief that teaching can overcome the effects of other influences (e.g. the home). Educator's personal efficacy beliefs are associated with their decisions regarding difficult-to-teach learners. Educators with a high sense of efficacy are (according to these theorists) more likely to recommend regular education placement for these learners and are less likely to be influenced by factors unrelated to learner achievement (such as student background) when making placement decisions. Soodak and Podell (1998:18) found that educators with a high sense of personal efficacy are more willing to take responsibility for meeting the needs of learners with learning problems in their own classrooms than those with a low sense of personal efficacy.

2.5 THE SUPPORT SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATORS COULD OFFER TO EDUCATORS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

2.5.1 Support teams

The White Paper No. 6 on Special Needs Education (DoE, 2001: 29) suggests the strengthening of education support services in South Africa by means of the following guidelines:

- The reduction of all education and training barriers to learning by means of strengthened education support services.
- The strengthened education support service will have at its centre, new district-based support teams that comprise staff from provincial, district, regional and head offices and from special schools. The primary function of these district support teams will be to evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness and suggest modifications. Through support teaching, learning and management, they will build the capacity of schools, early childhood and adult basic education and training centres, colleges and higher education institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs.
- At institutional level, in general, further and higher education requires institutions to establish institutional-level support teams. The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly co-ordinated support services. These services will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Where appropriate, these teams will be strengthened by expertise from the local community, district support teams and higher education institutions. District support teams will provide the full range of education support services to institutional-level support teams.
- Within the principles of the post-provisioning model designated posts will have to be created in all district support teams. Staff appointed to these posts will, as

members of the district support team, develop and co-ordinate school-based support for all educators.

- Special schools and settings will be converted to resource centres and integrated into district support teams so that they can provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to neighbourhood schools. This new role will be performed by special schools and settings in addition to the services that they provide to their existing learners base.

2.5.2 Guidelines for school-based support teams

Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:159) maintain that educator support teams focus on empowering educators to develop preventative and promotive strategies in the school framework. Educator support teams prevent inappropriate referrals of learners to outside agencies or support services. All referrals go through the educator support team to enable them to support the educator and a first-phase level in handling the situation in class. If a referral to outside agencies has to be made, the educator support team has the function of co-ordinating the recommendations made and to ensure that ongoing monitoring and support strategies are in place.

According to Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999: 160) an educator support team at school level can be composed of educators in the school who act as the core support team and, where appropriate, include parents and learners. The co-ordinator of this team should be an educator with training and/or experience in working with learners with difficulties. This team then functions as a permanent structure in the school setting. The team involves different educators, parents and learners on an on-going basis, based on the needs of the educators, parents and learners themselves and the role they have to play in the process of providing support to learners.

When establishing institutional-level support teams, the Ministry of Education (according to the White Paper No. 6, DoE, 2001:48) should assist general and further education and training institutions in establishing their own support teams. The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support services that support the learning and teaching

process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Where appropriate, institutions should strengthen these teams with expertise from the local community district support teams and higher education institutions. District support teams will provide the full range of education support services, such as professional development in curriculum and assessment.

2.5.3 Support educators

Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999:128) maintain that educators are central to the success of inclusion. The new OBE curriculum in South Africa expects educators in South African classrooms to accommodate learner diversity. It places the major responsibility for meeting special educational needs on the shoulders of mainstream educators rather than on special educators, although it accepts the necessity for separate provision for a small proportion of learners. This is a change for educators in historically advantaged schools who have in the past been able to rely on special schools and classes for learners with learning difficulties of various kinds.

Educators in mainstream but inclusive classrooms will not be able to accommodate all learners without support. The term *support* is used in this context in order to describe both the learning support provided by educators to individual learners in the classroom and the structures and arrangements beyond the classroom, which makes it possible for educators to do this (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 1999:128).

Westwood (1993:200) further maintains that a *support educator* (that could also serve as a mentor; see 3.2.1) in the school will provide a service to learners with special needs by assisting the classroom educator to develop or adapt appropriate learning programmes to cater for exceptional children. He or she may spend time teaching learners individually or in small groups within the classroom or in withdrawal situations. The support educator will work in co-operation with the class educator and his or her work should supplement the regular class educator's programme and not replace it. Some of the duties of the support educator will include the following:

- Educational assessment and diagnosis using formal and informal methods in conjunction with information provided by specialists or agencies.
- Regular evaluation of the progress made by learners receiving direct support and the keeping of appropriate records.
- Teaching of individuals or small groups within the classroom or elsewhere.
- Team teaching with regular class educators.
- Presenting school-based in-service development seminars.

2.5.4 Interdisciplinary collaboration

Whether or not arrangements and structures exist for formal collaborative work, all schools should be aware of the local network of related support services that is available to them and should therefore strive to build positive relationships with service providers so that their combined resources can be harnessed to meet learners' needs. Internationally, multidisciplinary assessments and interventions are often co-ordinated within a pre-school assessment unit. Educational psychologists can also play a major role, not only in their contribution to the assessment process, but also in supporting the learner's transition from the pre-school setting to compulsory school (Solity and Bickler, 1994 : 40).

According to Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:158) collaboration in inclusive education offers the opportunity for capitalizing on the diverse and specialised knowledge of educators and enables schools to provide quality learning support for all their learners. Collaborative functions fall within the domain of communication and collaborative planning, and include exchanging and sharing information, joint responsibility and accountability; thus creating positive independence and making unique contributions.

According to Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:158) collaboration can be difficult for educators who are accustomed to working individualistically in their own classrooms. Pre-conditions for successful collaboration are as follows:

- Emotional (attitudes), cognitive (knowledge and skills), interpersonal (support and help) and educational needs of educators should be dealt with so that educators can reach a new understanding about their work, its purpose, and how it connects with others.
- The recognition that a number of processes, practices and mechanisms that are already in place have the potential to facilitate the overcoming of barriers to learning and development and to provide quality education for all learners.
- Special and mainstream educators should become familiar with the concept of consultation and collaboration and ways in which they can participate as partners and team members.
- Special school educators need to increase their efforts to converse, plan cooperatively and share information with mainstream classroom educators and new roles have to be negotiated for both mainstream and special school educators.
- Time provisions need to be made in order to facilitate the implementation of collaboration.
- The power of collaborative teams lies in the capacity to merge unique skills of talented educators. Thus educators themselves are existing educational resources that could be utilized in educator support teams in mainstream and special schools to provide support to the school as a whole in an empowering way.

2.5.5 Capacity building

According to the document *Draft guidelines for implementation of Inclusive Education* (DoE, 2002:61) district support teams (as is the case with mentors) are in a key position to provide training and support for full service mainstream schools. However, full service institutions are encouraged to develop their own plan for on-going development, based on their particular context. Capacity building as a part of the transformation process takes time and all stakeholders need time to put in practice new skills so as to master them.

According to the same document (DoE, 2002:65) all educators should be able to teach all learners. However, all educators constantly need new skills in curriculum differentiation, curriculum assessment, assessment of potential, collaborative teaching and learning, collaborative planning and sharing reflection on practices and co-operation. This is especially the case in inclusive education. Furthermore, for inclusive education to work, educators also have to be able to work together and support each other both in the classroom and outside. Communication and collaborative skills are essential.

2.5.6 Diploma and degree programmes in special needs education

The diploma and degree programmes related to special needs education offered at both contact and distance campuses of Vista University in South Africa are all evident of the importance of inclusive education in the current educational situation in South Africa as well as the opportunities that already exist for mainstream and special needs educators to improve their qualifications and, at the same time, learn more about special needs and inclusive education. According to the Academic Calendar of Vista University (2003:27; 39-40; 50) the following programmes and modules, amongst others, are offered to prospective students:

Advanced Certificate in Education (Special Education Needs)

This programme includes the following modules:

- Inclusion, special education and Curriculum 2005

- The learner with special educational needs
- Assessment in special needs education
- Support to learners with special needs
- Teaching methodologies for special needs education
- Preparation for inclusive education.
- Practical teaching.
- collaboration, support systems and community development.

Baccalaureus Educationis Honoris Degree (BEDHON): Psychology of Education (Special Needs Education)

This programme includes the following modules:

- Foundations of educational psychology
- Development and learning psychology
- Didactics
- Teaching methodologies for special needs education
- Quantitative research in education
- Qualitative research in education
- Special educational needs
- Support to learners with special needs
- Curriculum studies
- Research essay in education: special needs education

Magister Educationis (Course Work) (MED CW): Psychology of Education: Special Needs and Support Services

This programme includes the following course modules to be completed during the first year of registration:

- Perspectives on special education
- Education support services
- Overcoming barriers to learning and development
- The rendering of education support services

During the second year students must complete a research project on any issue related to special needs education and support services

2.6 CONFIDENTIALITY

The Warnock Report in London (cf Dean, 1989:14) states that "the effective development of special education requires whole-hearted co-operation between the health, social and education services of a country". These services share the care of learners with special educational needs. *Confidentiality*, amongst others, is one of the principles. Warnock sets out some clear principles for this confidentiality:

- Relevant information should be shared between professionals concerned with meeting an individual learner's needs whenever it is in the best interests of the learner and his parents.
- Sensitive information should be kept in a special folder.
- Parents should be treated as partners whenever possible. Individual professionals must decide whether or not to show parents their reports, however.
- Parental support should be sought on the passing on of relevant information to service providers.

2.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Chapter two focuses on the possible problems experienced by the educator in the context of inclusive education and the support special needs educators can offer in this regard.

Investigations made prove beyond reasonable doubt that the redistribution of special education resources in South Africa is still a major problem. According to Green (1989 in Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booysen, 1996:41) any available resources are likely to be channelled into separate provision for children with severe handicaps, while the majority of children with special educational needs will remain in the regular classroom.

Other problems are the level of demands on educators; changes and stress; educators' preparedness for inclusive education; educators' attitudes towards inclusive education; lack of educational; educator support; and so on.

As long as the above-mentioned problems are still in place educators will find it increasingly difficult to adopt, and adapt within, inclusive education, the reason being unprepared to change. The results of this investigation indicate that huge effort will have to be made by policy makers and provincial education departments to effect a paradigm shift towards inclusion.

In this chapter it has also been explained that district and institutional support teams can enhance the success of inclusive education by providing training and support for full service mainstream schools. The training of educators in this regard is also not only important but essential for the success of inclusive education. Educators' capabilities can also be enhanced through self-empowerment, for example, by studying courses on special needs education as outlined in this chapter. Finally, the importance of a *support educator* (that could be a mentor to mainstream educators) was also highlighted.

The next chapter will subsequently focus on *mentoring* as a possible solution for problems experienced by educators.

CHAPTER 3

MENTORING AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION FOR PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY MAINSTREAM EDUCATORS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A LITERATURE STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Britain students studying to become educators spend more than 80% of their training time in the classrooms at schools. In South Africa the equivalent is less than 10%. It would, however, serve no purpose to increase the time student educators spend in schools if they have no one to take co-responsibility for their training. At many schools there are experienced educators who are experts when it comes to practical teaching and whose expertise could be used to good effect. It is proposed that students should spend more time in school during their initial teacher training and that they should be guided and supported by *mentor educators* as school based experts in training for their future profession (Dreyer, 1998:109).

This should also apply to beginner educators who start their training careers and who have to be initiated into the world of practical, full time teaching and learning. Research concerning mentorship and matters relating thereto, has shown that experienced mentor-educators have the expertise and abilities to guide and assist student or beginner educators in becoming efficient educators and they should therefore be utilised as partners in the training or initiation of the novices. It is also found that mentorship teaching and induction programmes are an effective means of attaining the goal of striking a balance between school based and university/college based educator training and/or induction of beginner educators (Dreyer, 1998: 109).

In paragraph 2.4.2.5 it was indicated that the average educator is apparently neither prepared nor ready to teach learners in inclusive classrooms effectively. This includes inadequate knowledge, skills and training of these, educators in the context

of inclusive education (see 2.4.3.1). It is therefore necessary to investigate the feasibility of mentoring as a solution to these problems.

3.2 THE NATURE OF EDUCATOR MENTORING

3.2.1 What is mentoring?

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 1995:731) defines the concept *mentor* as follows: *A trusted adviser of somebody with experience in a particular field.* *The Reader's Digest Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (Baker, 1998:509) also defines *mentor* as an experienced and trusted adviser.

The word *mentor*, according Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995:7), comes from *The Odyssey*, written by the Greek poet Homer. As Odysseus ("Ulysses", in Latin) is preparing to go fight the Trojan War, he realizes he is leaving behind his one and only heir, Telemachis. Since "Telie" (as he was known to his buddies) is only in junior high and since wars tend to drag on for years, Odysseus recognizes that Telie needs to be coached on how to "king" while his father is off fighting. He hires a trusted family friend named Mentor to be Telie's tutor. Mentor is both wise and sensitive – two important ingredients of world-class mentoring.

From the medieval experience, mentoring is a logically accepted way of the old assisting the young to reach their goals so as to become the next generation of wise people. Fisher (1994:1) regards mentors as advisers, educators, councillors and role models who pass their experience to the young. Mentors are, according to Winberg (1999:2), support educators, educator supervisors, educator trainers, experienced educators or educator co-ordinators. From the teaching perspective, Tomilson (1995:20) defines mentors as skilled educators who actively assist the less experienced ones to attain the expected experience and skills in a positive and accepted way. Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995:13) define mentoring as off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking.

For the purpose of this investigation the person who is being supported by a mentor will be referred to as a *mentee*.

3.2.2 The purpose of educator mentoring

Educator mentoring serves a series of purposes such as personal growth, relating, assessing, coaching, team building, communicating and so on. Each of these are discussed in more details below.

3.2.2.1 Personal growth

According to Barbara and Field (1994:8) personal growth refers to the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes that form the basis of effective professional practice. Stewart and McGoldrick (1996:12) believe that mentoring serves a personal empowerment tool which focuses on winning full commitment of individuals in organisational issues with the highest level of emotional self-control. Attainment of this goal is a clear manifestation of personal development. According to Portner (1998:7) a mentor functions best by relating, assessing, coaching and guiding his/her mentee.

3.2.2.2 Relating

Mentors build and maintain relationships with their mentees based on mutual trust, respect and professionalism. Relating behaviours create an environment that allows mentors to develop a genuine understanding of their mentees' ideas and needs. A mentor encourages mentees to honestly share and reflect upon their experiences. (Portner, 1998:7). Mentoring does not happen haphazardly. It requires a high level of professionalism in which the mentor exhibits the qualities expected of him in his profession like giving professional advice (counselling) to mentees in order to establish a connection between ideas or situations that will eventually enhance the purpose of educator mentoring.

With regard to *professionalism*, Kerry and Mayes (1995:71) suggest that the attribution to educators of responsibility is presented and perceived both as a

recognition of their extended professionalism and as a contribution to that extension. They further maintain that professionalism fits comfortably with two decades of development, which provide a fertile range of possibilities for the expansion of educators' roles as:

- curriculum developers;
- researchers within the framework of classroom action research;
- self-evaluators within the context of school reviews and personal appraisal;
- self-developers within the context of school-based staff development; and
- advisers; either formally as advisory educators or less formally as consultants available to support development and training across schools.

Moon, Butcher and Bird (2000:4) maintain that there is growing recognition that successful professional development programmes articulate well thought through ideas about the learning process. The skills associated with counselling are also imperative to successful professionalism and mentoring (Wilkin, 1992:86). According to Wilkin there are various models of counselling and one of the most common is the Egan approach to effective helping. This model describes the three stages of counselling as:

- identifying and clarifying problem situations and unused opportunities;
- goal setting - developing a more desirable scenario; and
- action - moving toward the preferred scenario.

3.2.2.3 Assessing

Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht (1997:6) define learner assessment as follows:

The process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about learners' learning. The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on learner achievement and progress and set the direction for ongoing teaching and learning.

During assessment mentors likewise gather and diagnose data about their mentees' ways of teaching and learning; they determine their mentees' competency and confidence to handle a given situation; they identify unique aspects of the school and community culture; and they take note of the local school district's formal and informal procedures and practices. Assessing behaviours ensure that the mentees' professional needs are identified so that mentoring decisions can be based on a thoughtful consideration of a variety of data (Portner 1998:7).

Bell (1996: 38) describes assessment through a mentor scale. The goal of the mentor scale is to provide a painless way to determine what personal attributes the mentee brings to the mentoring relationship. The goal is not to judge, evaluate, or criticise the mentee as a person. The objective is rather to offer the mentee a picture of his/her gifts and his/her potential blind spots.

3.2.2.4 Coaching

Portner (1998:8) maintains that, through coaching, mentors help their mentees fine-tune their professional skills, enhance their grasp of subject matter, locate and acquire resources and expand their repertoire of teaching modalities. Coaching behaviour allows mentors to serve as role models to their mentees; to share relevant experiences, examples and strategies; and to open new avenues by which mentees can, through reflection and practice, take responsibility for improving their own teaching.

According to Joyce and Showers (1995 in Moon, Butcher and Bird 2000:296) in-service training usually consists of five components. The researcher is of the opinion that these five components can also be used very effectively in the process of mentees being coached by mentors:

- theory;
- demonstration;
- practice;
- feedback; and
- coaching.

3.2.2.5 Guiding

Mentors wean their mentees from dependence by guiding them through the process of reflecting on decisions and actions for themselves and encouraging them to construct their own informed teaching and learning approaches. Teaching involves constant decision making. The mentor places the responsibility for decision making with the mentee. Decisions about teaching are driven by reflection. The guiding skill of the mentor is to ask the right questions the right way, and at the right time – questions that encourage the mentee to reflect on his or her decisions. Guiding behaviours stimulate the mentees' creative and critical thinking, empower them to envision future situations; encourage them to take informed risks, and help them build the capacity to develop perceptive decisions and take appropriate actions (Portner, 1998:8).

3.2.2.6 Team teaching

Kruger and Adams (1998:237) suggest a more efficient use of professional expertise in schools as part of a mentoring process that aims to respond to learner diversity. Functional and co-operative linkages between educators in a school should be fostered. An educator with particular knowledge about an ethnic or religious minority (or learners with special educational needs for that matter) may be able to guide her or his colleagues in curriculum development. On occasions, educators may work together to prepare and present lessons for their combined classes. The presentation skills of educators may be complementary: one educator may excel at class lessons, while another may have a flair for convening group activities.

Stage 5: The coordinator (or mentor) and referring educator discuss the suggested strategies with the team, but the ultimate selection of strategies rests with the referring educator.

Stage 6: A plan to follow up on the ideas or strategies that are selected by the referring educator, is established. All aspects of the plan are put in writing, at least in outline form, so that each team member involved has a clear idea of his or her responsibilities. This written plan also serve as a record to facilitate accountability.

The above-mentioned stages are therefore also appropriate in enhancing mentoring as a possible solution for the problems experienced by mainstream educators in inclusive education.

3.3.2.7 Attainment of job satisfaction

Mentoring develops educators in the sense that their personal commitment to their school-based duties is increased (Murdock, 1997:115-116). Just as mentoring can help to restore a lost zeal and culture of learning and teaching, it also has the power to ease the implementation of inclusive education because the mentees will be able to adapt themselves to changes much easier (Monk and Dillon, 1996:2-3). This may eventually help them to improve their classroom practices in their quest to provide learners with excellent education (cf. Zuber-Skerrit, 1997:147). The culture and quality of education will therefore be maintained in inclusive education since the tension created by a sudden change to an innovation will have faded away (cf. Rapuleng, 2002:63).

3.3.2.8 Mentoring as a vital investment in people

All educators who understand and accept a mentoring system may automatically become assets to their own institutions. They might become mentors in their own right and support those who still need to be mentored. Mentoring at this level should be perceived as a highly cost-effective practice. Consequently, the school will be able to invest in its own human resources (Rapuleng, 2002:67).

3.2.3 Communication in the mentoring process

Mentoring involves, amongst other things, giving advice to the mentees. Bell (1996: 58–59) suggest the following steps for giving advice:

3.2.3.1 Steps for giving advice

Step 1: Clearly state the performance problem or goal

Begin your advice giving by letting the mentee know the focus or intent of mentoring. When giving advice for work, the mentor must be very specific and clear in his/her statement. Ambiguity will cloud the conversation and risks leaving the mentee more confused than enlightened.

Step 2: Make sure you agree on the focus

If what the mentor sees as a performance challenge is seen by the mentee as something else, the mentor's advice will be viewed as over-controlling or smothering. The mentor should make sure that the mentee is as eager to improve as the mentor is eager to see him/her (mentee) improve.

Step 3: Ask permission to give advice

This is the most important step. The mentor's goal at this point is twofold:

- (a) to communicate advice without eliciting mentee resistance; and
- (b) to keep ownership of the challenge with the mentee.

In the case of the mentee resisting the advice from the mentor, the mentor should follow the following two rules:

- (a) Never resist resistance. Back off; take a second. The mentor should examine his/her stance, tone and choice of words to see if he/she (mentor) might be inadvertently fuelling the resistance.

- (b) Then name the issue and take the hit! Sometimes, simply stating, in a low-key non-confrontational way, how the mentor sees the situation while assuming culpability, can drain the tension. The mentor can say something like this: "I could be wrong about this but I worry that I may have come on too strong just now and implied that I am commanding you. That is not my intent."

Step 4: State your advice in the first person singular

Mentors' phrases like "you ought to" quickly raise resistance. By keeping advice in the first person singular - "what I found helpful" or "what worked for me" - helps eliminate "shoulds" and "ought-to's". The mentor will subsequently hear such advice unscreened by defensiveness or resistance.

3.2.3.2 Communicating understanding

Gillis (1996:19) sees communicating understanding as being helpful between the mentor and the mentee. In counselling, the word "*understanding*", according to Gillis, implies that the client should feel that, what he/she is saying and experiencing, is being correctly sensed and interpreted by the counsellor; that the counsellor is endeavouring to see things from his/her point of view; and is trying to understand what is happening in terms of his/her feelings and values. Gillis further maintains that the only practical means of ascertaining whether the helper is truly in touch with the client's real feelings, is to verbally share with the client, from time to time, the understanding of what the helper senses he/she (the client) is saying and experiencing.

3.3 THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD MENTOR

Rowley (1999:20-22) helped school districts in Chicago design mentor-based entry-year programmes. In that capacity Rowley maintains that he learned much by carefully listening to mentors and beginning educators and by systematically observing what seems to work in mentoring programmes. As a result of these

experiences, he identifies six basic, but essential, qualities of the good mentor. These qualities are discussed below:

3.3.1 The good mentor is committed to the role of mentoring

The good mentor is highly committed to the task of helping the mentee find success and gratification in his/her new responsibilities. Committed mentors show up for, and stay, on the job. Committed mentors understand that persistence is as important in mentoring as it is in classroom teaching. To increase the odds that mentor educators possess the commitment fundamental to delivering effective support, the following three aspects are important (Rowley, 1999:20):

- Good programmes require formal mentor training as a prerequisite to mentoring.
- It is unreasonable to expect an educator to commit to a role that has not been clearly defined. The best mentoring programmes provide specific descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of mentor educators.
- Good mentoring programmes require mentors to maintain simple logs or journals that document conferences and other professional development activities involving the mentor and mentee.

3.3.2 The good mentor is accepting of the mentee

At the foundation of any effective helping relationship is empathy. According to Rogers (1958; in Rowley, 1999:21) *empathy* means accepting another person without making judgements. It means setting aside, at least temporarily, personal beliefs and values. The good mentor educator recognizes the power of accepting the mentee as a developing person and professional. Accepting mentors do not judge or reject mentees as being poorly prepared, overconfident, naïve or defensive. Should mentees exhibit such characteristics, good mentors would simply view these traits as challenges to overcome in their efforts to deliver meaningful support.

3.3.3 The good mentor is skilled at providing instructional support

Mainstream educators enter inclusive education with varying degrees of skill in instructional design and delivery for learners with special educational needs. Good mentors are willing to coach these mainstream educators to improve their performance, whatever their skill level. According to Rowley (1999: 21), lacking opportunities for shared experience often force mentors to limit instructional support to workroom conversations. Such shared experiences can take different forms: mentors and mentees can engage in team teaching or team planning; mentees can observe mentors; mentors can observe mentees; or both can observe other educators.

3.3.4 The good mentor is effective in different interpersonal contexts

All mainstream educators are not created equal, nor are all mentor educators the same. Good mentor educators recognize that each mentoring relationship occurs in a unique interpersonal context. Mainstream educators can display widely different attitudes toward the help offered by a mentor. One year a mentor may work with a mentee who is hungry for advice, only to be assigned a mentee the next year who reacts defensively to thoughtfully offered suggestions. Just as good educators adjust their teaching behaviours and communications to meet the needs of individual learners, good mentors adjust their mentoring communications to meet the needs of individual mentees. To make such adjustments, good mentors possess deep understanding of their own communication styles and willingness to objectively observe the behaviour of the mentee (Rowley, 1999:21).

3.3.5 The good mentor is a model of a continuous learner

Mentees rarely appreciate mentors who have right answers to every question and best solutions for every problem. Good mentor educators are transparent about their own search for better answers and more effective solutions to their own problems. They model this commitment by their openness to learn from colleagues, including mentees, and by their willingness to pursue professional growth through a variety of means. They lead and attend workshops. They develop and experiment with new

practices. They write and read articles in professional journals. Most important they share new knowledge and perplexing questions with their mentees in a collegial manner (Rowley, 1999:22).

3.3.6 The good mentor communicates hope and optimism

The crucial characteristic of mentors is the ability to communicate their belief that a person is capable of transcending present challenges and of accomplishing great things in the future. Good mentor educators capitalise on opportunities to affirm the human potential of their mentees. They do so in private conversations and in public settings. Good mentors share their own struggles and frustrations and how they overcome them. To ensure that mentees are supported by mentors capable of communicating hope and optimism, quality programmes should take the necessary precautions to avoid using mentors who have lost their positive outlook. If educators and administrators value mentoring highly and take it seriously, mentoring will attract caring and committed educators who recognize the complex and challenging nature of classroom teaching, and especially, inclusive education. It will attract special needs educators who demonstrate their hope and optimism for the future by their willingness to help a mainstream educator discover the same joys and satisfactions that they have found in their own career in working with learners with special educational needs (Rowley, 1999:22).

3.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter contains a literature study on mentorship. It includes a clarification of the concepts mentoring, mentor and mentee, the purpose of mentoring as well as the duties and the qualities of a good mentor.

If considered in conjunction with the contents of Chapter 2, it now becomes clear from the contents in this chapter that there is a close relationship between the support special needs educators could offer to mainstream educators in the context of inclusive education and a mentoring system in which the special needs educators will serve as the support educators (mentors). In this chapter it has also become

clear that the communication of understanding between a mentor and a mentee is essential in enhancing the success of an innovation. It therefore seems imperative that a mentoring system be employed to assist with the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream public schools in South Africa.

It must also be acknowledged, however, that mentoring may bring with it a number of problems. In order to maximise the positive outcomes of mentoring programmes, Stewart (1992:12) mentions the importance of providing extra resources for this purpose. However, decisions about extra resource allocation need to be made in a very responsible way (cf. McAlister and Connely, 1990:34). Increasing resources may, in fact, become a very thorny issue in South African education.

The next chapter subsequently reports on a qualitative interview opinion survey among a sample of special needs educators and mainstream educators regarding the implementation of inclusive education and the feasibility of instituting a mentoring system in this regard.

CHAPTER 4

A QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW OPINION SURVEY AMONG SPECIAL NEEDS AND MAINSTREAM EDUCATORS AND OFFICIALS: RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapters 2 and 3 of this study the possible problems experienced by educators in the context of inclusive education, the support special needs educators may offer in this regard as well as mentoring as a possible solution for problems experienced by educators were investigated by means of a literature study. It has subsequently become necessary to employ a qualitative interview opinion survey among a sample of special needs educators and mainstream educators. The interviews performed contained open-ended questions aimed at obtaining an in-depth understanding of educators' experience of the real situation. When a survey is performed the attitudes, beliefs, demographics behaviour, opinion, habits, desires and ideas of respondents are usually investigated. Surveys are therefore very relevant when perceptions are investigated (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:34-36). In the case of this research study the researcher eventually opted for a survey of the perceptions of special needs educators and mainstream educators in so far as the introduction of inclusive education and a mentoring system in South African schools are concerned.

4.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research is more concerned with understanding social phenomena from the perspectives of the respondents who partake in this type of research. Research data obtained in qualitative research are not reported in terms of numbers but rather in terms of detailed narrations. In other words, qualitative research results involve detailed descriptions by making use of words instead of numbers. The main aim with qualitative research is to search for context-bound generalisations, if possible.

In qualitative research the researcher is usually also a participant in the lives of those persons who are being investigated. Thus objectivity is less important in qualitative than in quantitative research. Qualitative research usually occurs by means of open-ended, in-depth questionnaires and/or interviews, observations, the analysis and interpretation of existing documents as well as sound and video recordings. Because of the detailed nature of qualitative research reports samples taken from a population are relatively small and this usually restricts the researcher to a case study of a particular school or situation. If open-ended and in-depths questionnaires or interviews are employed as qualitative research tools, the questions asked are usually open-ended to allow for participants' own perceptions. With regard to modes of inquiry qualitative research employs ethnography, phenomenology, case studies, grounded theory and/or critical studies (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001: 15: 31: 35-39).

4.3 SURVEY RESEARCH

A survey is the assessment of the current status of opinions, beliefs and attitudes by means of questionnaires or interviews from the known population.

The purpose of this investigation is to employ a qualitative interview opinion survey among mainstream and special needs educators regarding problems experienced within a system of inclusive education and possible solutions to this effect. Because surveys are usually employed to investigate attitudes, beliefs, values, demographics, behaviour, opinions, habits and desires of respondents (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:34-36) a survey would be very relevant to investigate the perceptions of educators regarding the implementation of inclusive education and the possible institution of a mentoring system in this regard. In the case of this research study the researcher therefore opted for such a survey.

For this purpose the researcher identified a limited number of five special needs educators, five secondary mainstream educators and four primary mainstream educators from the Mangaung township area (an area occupied by disadvantaged community). Two officials from the Department of Education were also included in

the survey, bringing the total number of respondents to 16 (cf. McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:175-176: 400-401).

4.4 QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

Qualitative interviews involve an in-depth study using face-to-face techniques to collect data from people in their natural settings (McMillan and Schumacher 2001:598). In this investigation the qualitative interviews that were employed were basically open-ended to semi-structured with some amount of probing, if necessary (see the interview schedule in Appendix A). The questions asked did not provide any choices from which the respondents had to select an answer but were rather phrased to allow for individual responses. Although they were open-ended, they were fairly specific in their intent (cf. McMillan and Schumacher, 2001: 269). The probing employed during the interviews involved elaboration of detail, further explanations and the clarification of responses (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:448).

An in-depth interview is often characterised as a conversation with a goal. The researcher may use a general interview schedule or protocol but should not stick to a set of specific questions that are phrased exactly the same for every interviewee. Rather, there should be a number of general questions, with considerable latitude to pursue a wide range of topics. In the case of this investigation twelve fairly open-ended questions were included in the interview schedule. During an open-ended interview the interviewee can shape the content of the interview by focusing on topics of importance or interest. In fact, the researcher usually encourages the person to talk in detail about areas of interest. In-depth interviews typically last an hour or more. Often the researcher will tape the interviews and transcribe the tapes to analyse common themes from descriptions of experiences (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:42).

According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994:46) the qualitative method of data collection most often involves people's words and actions, and thus requires methods that allow the researchers to capture language and behaviour. The most

useful ways of gathering these forms of data are participant observation, in-depth interviews, group interviews and the collection of relevant documents. Observations and interview data are collected by the researcher in the form of field notes and audiotaped interviews, which are later transcribed for use in data analysis.

According to Johnson (1994:44) successful interviews are usually characterised by the following qualities:

- Consistency through the application of standardized stimuli to the respondent.
- Interviewees who have very little knowledge of the research in question.
- The interviewer who makes contact with the respondent and briefly explains the purpose of the research enquiry.
- An interviewer's ability to persuade the respondent to participate in the enquiry by being interviewed.
- An interviewer who has the ability to work through the interview schedule using a standardised language.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:448-449) an effective interview depends on efficient probing and sequencing of questions. The following guidelines are suggested:

- Interview probes elicit elaboration of detail, further explanations, and clarification of responses. Well-designed interview scripts are field tested to identify the placement and wording of probes necessary to adjust topics to the variation in individuals' responses.
- Statements of the purpose and focus of the research are usually made at the outset. Assurances of protection of the person's identity and an overview of the possible discussion topics are given at this time.

- The order of questions varies although most researchers make choices to enable them to obtain adequate data for each question from the informant efficiently.
- Demographic questions may be spread throughout the interview or presented in the concluding remarks. Some researchers prefer to obtain these data at the beginning of the interview to establish rapport and focus attention.
- Complex, controversial or difficult questions are usually reserved for the middle or later periods in the interview when the informant's interest has been aroused (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:448-449).

4.5 THE AIM OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aim of this investigation was to explore the possibility of employing a mentoring system (with special needs educators serving as the mentors and mainstream educators as the mentees) in order to address the problems either experienced or foreseen by mainstream educators in the context of the implementation of inclusive education in South African public schools. In order to reach this aim, the following research questions were identified and investigated:

- What support could special needs educators offer to mainstream educators in a system of inclusive education?
- What advantages or problems do mainstream educators usually experience or foresee in a system of inclusive education?
- Could mentoring of mainstream educators by special needs educators in a system of inclusive education help to solve the problems experienced by these educators?

The researcher therefore intended to interpret and evaluate the results of this investigation in conjunction with the literature study on inclusive education as well as mentoring.

4.6 RESEARCH DESIGN FOR THIS INVESTIGATION

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:31) a research design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions the data will be obtained. In other words, the research design indicates how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects and what methods of data collection are used. The purpose of a research design is to provide, within an appropriate mode of inquiry, the most valid and accurate answers to the research questions that were identified.

This research study involved a qualitative interview opinion survey among special needs and mainstream educators and officials by means of semi-structured, but in-depth, interviews consisting of twelve fairly open-ended questions. This qualitative interview opinion survey was conducted among 14 educators and two Department of Education officials.

4.7 SELECTION OF SUBJECTS

Due to financial constraints, limited accessibility of the subjects to the researcher and the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher identified a limited number of five special needs educators, five mainstream educators from a secondary school and four mainstream educators from a primary school in the Mangaung township area (an area occupied by a disadvantaged community). Two departmental officials were also included. Care was therefore taken to select subjects that come from all the different types of public schools in this area. Thus the sampling used in this investigation can be typified as purposeful and convenience sampling (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:175-176).

In the case of *purposeful* sampling the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic in question. On the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population a judgement is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:175). According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994:45) purposeful sampling (also called purposive, judgement or judgemental sampling) increases the likelihood that variability that is common in any social phenomenon, will be represented in the data in contrast to random sampling which tries to achieve variation through the use of random selection and large sample size. Purposeful sampling is therefore done to increase the utility of the information obtained from a sample. This requires that information be obtained about variations among the subjects before a sample is chosen (cf. McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:401).

Convenience sampling involves the selection of a sample on the basis of the members of the sample being accessible or expedient (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001: 175). In the case of this investigation the researcher opted for subjects from three schools that were easily accessible to the researcher.

4.8 THE STATUS, ROLE AND OBJECTIVITY OF THE RESEARCHER

The researcher is a 43 year old married male with two children. He is an educator at the mainstream secondary school that was included in this investigation and is the Head of Department for Guidance and Life Orientation at this school.

According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994:290) *objectivity* means to be true, factual and real, to make something into something else and to be cold and distant. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:11) view objectivity as being unbiased, open-minded and not subjective. As a procedure it refers to data collection and analysis procedures from which a reasonable interpretation can be made.

While acknowledging that no researcher can really claim to be totally objective, the researcher hereby declares that he has tried to remain as objective as possible.

Being a *participant observer* in an investigation would obviously reduce the objectivity of any researcher (cf. McMillan and Schumacher, 2001: 41).

4.9 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE RESEARCH

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:244) as well as Kruger and Miller (1990:158) *reliability* refers to the consistency of the measurement – the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection. Another way to conceptualise reliability is to determine the extent to which measures are free from error. If an instrument has little error it is reliable; if it has a great amount of error it is unreliable. If the nature of research is qualitative, this in itself should increase the reliability of the research since qualitative research reports on how a phenomenon is actually experienced by the participants. Another aspect that may increase the reliability of research is to make the interview schedule that is used available for scrutiny *before* performing the interviews. In the case of this investigation the interview schedule was scrutinised and approved by both the supervisor and the Department of Education.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:167) *validity* means the degree to which scientific explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world. It also refers to the truth or falsity of proportions generated by research. There are two types of design validity, namely internal validity and external validity.

Internal validity expresses the extent to which extraneous variables have been controlled or accounted for (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001: 186;326). In this regard the researcher can report that only four of the list of twelve possible extraneous factors that usually influences the internal validity of any kind of research and that have been identified by McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 327), may have influenced the data obtained in this investigation in some or other way. These include the *selection of subjects*; the *diffusion of treatment* (where certain subjects could have received information about the interviews from other subjects before they themselves were being interviewed); *experimenter effects* (unintended effects the researcher may have had on the responses made by the subjects); and *subject*

effects (possible changes in the behaviour or responses of the respondents because of the fact that they were being interviewed).

External validity refers to the *generalisability* of the results, that is, the extent to which the results and conclusions can be generalized to other people and settings (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001: 193; 327). In the case of this investigation, its external validity will refer to the extent to which the results and conclusions made can be generalised to special and mainstream schools that were not included in the sample. In this regard, the researcher can report that only three of the nine possible threats to the external validity of research, as identified by McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 328), could have influenced the generalisability of the results. These include *the selection of subjects*; *the description of variables* (the generalisation being limited to similar mainstream and special schools in the Mangaung township area); and *the time of interview interaction* (the research was done in November and December 2002 when the schools were on the verge of closing for the December holidays).

In light of the afore-mentioned arguments the researcher therefore concludes that the research results obtained during this investigation can be viewed as *relatively reliable and valid*.

4.10 ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND REPORTING OF DATA

This research project can be typified as qualitative in nature because the respondents were required to air their views with regard to inclusive education and mentoring by answering a number of open-ended questions during interviews. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed and the transcripts were coded in order to look for common patterns and problems. The results of this investigation are reported in the form of *detailed descriptions* of the interviews followed by an identification of typical problem areas and typical opinions regarding solutions to these problems. In the last chapter these results are eventually interpreted in an inductive manner together with the results of the literature study.

4.11 INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS AND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICIALS

During November and December 2002 the researcher conducted a number of 16 semi-structured to open-ended interviews. These interviews were conducted with:

- Five educators from a special school in the Mangaung township area;
- Five educators from a mainstream secondary school in the Mangaung township area;
- Four educators from a mainstream primary school in the Mangaung township area; and
- Two Department of Education officials

The researcher visited three schools as well as two officials to conduct the interviews. In all these instances the researcher was warm-heartedly welcomed and the interviews went very smoothly. Because of the limited scope of this report and the commonality of opinions found during the various interviews, only four of these interviews are subsequently discussed in detail and should serve as examples of all the other interviews that were performed.

4.11.1 A visit to a Department of Education official (Ms A)

Ms A was visited during November 2002. She is a married woman with two children and serves as a remedial adviser in the Department of Education where she has to support educators in this regard. Her husband is a policeman by profession. Ms A was visited at her home which is situated in the Bloemanda suburb in the Mangaung township area. This was a very interesting experience for both her husband and children who observed her being interviewed through audiotaping.

With regard to the implementation of inclusive education she felt positive, her reason being that learners with special educational needs will learn to feel part of the community. She did not really foresee any problem with the implementation of inclusive education. The advantage of inclusive education, she said, is that special needs learners will get an opportunity to interact with mainstream learners on an equal footing. To ensure that inclusive education is accepted and supported, she suggested that mainstream educators must be trained on how to deal and educate special needs learners. She also viewed a mentoring system as a very good idea as it would speed up the process of implementation. The educators, however, will have to be open to change and change their own mindset if we want to ensure that a mentoring system will succeed.

With regard to the advantages of a mentoring system, she believed that time will be saved; mentoring will create more confidence among educators; and the implementation of inclusive education will be completed in shorter period. To ensure that a mentoring system is accepted and supported by the implementers of inclusive education, she suggested regular workshops for educators and facilitators. Education officials will have to ensure that enough and appropriate learning support materials are available. Finally, the more educators with special needs training are involved in the training of mainstream educators, the better the chances for the successful implementation of such a mentoring system. Above all, resources must be made available and there must be continuous contact between special needs and mainstream educators.

4.11.2 A visit to another Department of Education official (Mr B)

This official was also visited during November 2002. He is a married person with one child and has served as Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Special Needs Education) since 1996. Prior to that he has taught for three years in a mainstream secondary school in the Mangaung township area. His wife is also an educator.

In response to the question on the support that special needs educators could offer to mainstream educators in a system of inclusive education, Mr B said that special needs educators could help mainstream educators to understand the type and

nature of disabilities that learners with special educational needs have and how they could deal with these problems. Special needs educators can also be used as resource persons and a support system for mainstream educators and parents.

Regarding the question what problems mainstream educators would usually experience in a system of inclusive education, Mr B indicated that mainstream educators often do not have specialised training in dealing with learners with special needs. Consequently, they tend to struggle to teach these learners and usually avoid contact with them.

In response to the questions related to the mentoring of mainstream educators by special needs educators in a system of inclusive education, Mr B indicated that he was positive about this issue and believed that a mentoring system can help mainstream educators to solve their own problems. Mentoring would help to introduce the mainstream educators to the different types of learning disabilities and how to deal with them. This would involve mentoring mainstream educators on how to teach learners with special needs and how to orientate mainstream learners with regard to their fellow learners who have special needs.

In a system of inclusive education special needs educators will have to sensitise mainstream educators about ways in which the classroom and the school environment can be modified /altered to suit the physical needs of learners with special needs. They could also assist mainstream educators in the structuring of lessons in order to cater for both learners with special needs and mainstream learners in the same classroom.

4.11.3 A visit to School A

The interviews at this mainstream secondary school took place during November 2002. The surroundings of the school consists of beautiful garden with flowers, grass and trees. Inside the principal's office, there were various trophies won by the school choir. The school has a learner enrolment of 1 500 learners.

Mr C, who is the principal of the school, indicated to the researcher that he saw inclusive education as a very good idea as it would abolish self-consciousness among learners with special needs. Mainstream learners will also learn to get used to those with special needs. The problem with the implementation of inclusive education, however, will be the modification of the mainstream buildings to be accessible and user friendly to learners with special needs as well as the availability of special apparatus/aids for learning that may be required for (for example, blind and deaf learners). The advantages of inclusive education, according to Mr C, would be demystification of physically and other disabled learners as well as the integration of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. To ensure that inclusive education is accepted and supported, Mr C felt that mainstream educators will have to be trained to handle special needs learners. The learners themselves should also be properly informed, educated and sensitised regarding inclusive education.

Mr C interpreted the concept *mentoring* as assistance being provided by an expert to a novice. However, he felt that the introduction of a mentoring system would be a futile exercise as the mentors will not be recognised and appreciated by the mainstream educators because they will be seen as so-called "inspectors" who would want to "spy" on them. He therefore did not foresee any advantage of the implementation of mentoring system. If mentors are appointed in future, however, they should be provided with clear job descriptions.

4.11.4 A visit to School B

School B was also visited during November 2002. It is a special school in the Mangaung township area with the following background:

- The principal of the school is a female educator.
- The school has one deputy principal, four Heads of Departments and a staff component of 70 members of which only 15 are educators.
- There are six occupational therapists, two physiotherapists and one speech therapist who provide special services to the 220 learners at the school.

- The school has boarding facilities for learners who come from outside the Mangaung/Bloemfontein area. Forty girls and forty boys are accommodated in the school hostel.
- There are four clerks, two drivers who have to transport learners from their respective homes to school and back, four security officers, four factotums, sixteen hostel house mothers, seven cleaners and three cooks.
- The school is a Section 21 school and receives subsidy from the Department of Education for the day-to-day management of the school.

Mr D, who is a special needs educator at the school, was already familiar with the definition of inclusive education at the time of his interview. He said that, according to educational policy in South Africa, all learners, including the learners with special educational needs, have the right to be included in the mainstream education system and to become lifelong learners. He did not have any problem in connection with the implementation of inclusive education, except for the fact that most of the mainstream educators are not trained to work with such learners. This situation might make it difficult for mainstream educators and might frustrate them. To ensure the acceptance and support of inclusive education by mainstream educators, he suggested the training of these educators. Schools would also have to be restructured to accommodate special needs learners. The budget of each school would have to be increased because poverty is a contributory factor in so far as barriers to learning are concerned.

According to Mr D, the introduction of a mentoring system in South Africa would enable mainstream educators to identify learners with learning disabilities and empower them in assisting other educators. To ensure that a mentoring system is accepted and supported, he believed that the number of learners per educator would have to be decreased. The learner-educator ratio would ideally have to be approximately 1:15 in order to enhance individual attention to learners with special needs. Parents' and learners' views should also be taken into consideration. According to Mr D, the possible support that should be provided by the mentors to

the mainstream educators, is that these educators should be exposed to practical classroom situations. For example, practical lessons with special needs learners would have to be demonstrated. Besides the theory of inclusive education, they should also be sent to institutions where special needs learners are already being taught in order to do observations of how this is being done.

4.11.5 Possible support special needs educators could provide to mainstream educators

According to the 16 respondents being interviewed in this investigation, the possible support special needs educators can provide to mainstream educators are as follows:

- Helping mainstream educators with teaching aids suitable for learners with special educational needs. Mainstream educators must be shown how assistive devices are used.
- In order to solve problems, mainstream educators will need to be supported on a daily basis.
- Mainstream educators should be encouraged to seek information on inclusive education. In this regard further studies in the field of special needs education could be conducive.
- Mainstream educators will have to be provided with practical assistance in the classroom situation.
- Besides advising and guiding mainstream educators, special needs educators should be involved in training them how to deal with special needs learners.
- All the resources required to teach learners with special needs will also have to be provided to the mainstream educators.

- There must be continuous contact between the mentors and the mainstream educators.
- Mainstream educators will need the help of special needs educators on how to structure and plan lessons for learners with special needs.

4.11.6 The advantages of inclusive education

The advantages of inclusive education, as explained by the 16 interviewees, are as follows:

- Special needs learners will get an opportunity to interact on equal footing with mainstream learners.
- Inclusive education may lead to an improvement of existing facilities at mainstream schools.
- Special needs learners will no more be discriminated against or looked down upon. The stigmatisation and labelling of learners with special needs will be reduced.
- Mainstream learners may develop a better understanding and awareness of learners with special needs.
- Mainstream learners may become more grateful for their own strengths and abilities.
- Special needs learners may develop more self-confidence and not experience themselves as different. Psychologically, special needs learners will feel part of the community and will perform better.
- Special needs learners will also develop physically because of their physical interaction with mainstream learners.

4.11.7 Problems experienced or foreseen with inclusive education

The respondents mentioned the following problems that they have either experienced or foresaw with the implementation of inclusive education:

- The interaction between mainstream learners and special needs learners may sometimes subject the special needs learners to ridicule and embarrassment.
- There will be a lack of funds to restructure existing mainstream schools in order to accommodate special needs learners. Facilities will have to be improved and more educators will have to be appointed.
- Learners with special educational needs will have to condition themselves psychologically when interacting with mainstream learners.
- Without in-service training it will be impossible for mainstream educators to implement inclusive education successfully. They will be unable to identify and solve problems experienced by these learners and will not know how to teach and deal with special needs learners. A lack of knowledge and expertise about special needs education amongst mainstream educators may therefore have a negative impact on learners with special educational needs.
- The implementation of inclusive education in mainstream classrooms may retard the progress of mainstream learners who would otherwise be able to proceed and progress much faster.
- Some schools were designated by the education authorities to become full service inclusive schools from 2003 but they were informed in this regard at a very late stage in the year 2002.

4.11.8 The advantages of mentoring

The respondents taking part in the survey identified the following advantages of a mentoring system in which special needs educators will serve as mentors for mainstream educators:

- Mentoring will instill in mainstream educators a confidence they would otherwise not possess.
- Mainstream educators will become able to speed up the process of implementing inclusive education because they will be empowered and developed through the system of mentoring.
- Mainstream educators will learn in a practical way how to identify learners with special educational needs.
- Mentors can serve as advisors and provide practical examples to mainstream educators on how to plan and structure their lessons and how to teach learners with special educational needs.
- Mainstream educators will no longer be pressurised because they will gain the necessary skills and knowledge through the back-up support provided by their mentors.

4.11.9 Problems foreseen with a mentoring system

The respondents foresaw the following problems with the institution of a mentoring system for mainstream educators:

- Mentors will need to be professional educators themselves who have already studied and experienced special needs and inclusive education intensively.

- Mentors will have to be able to conduct workshops and seminars on inclusive education for mainstream educators (at least in collaboration with other educators).
- The problem may arise that certain mainstream educators may be of the opinion that they can manage without any assistance from mentors while others may not be co-operative in nature.
- Mentors might be viewed by some educators as so-called “inspectors” whose main task might be to “spy” on the mainstream educators. It must be remembered that outsiders are not always welcome everywhere. (The researcher, however, does not agree with the analogue made by respondents. The task of an inspector is rather to evaluate, inspect, monitor, and so on. To say that they spy is to deliberately give their work a wrong connotation).
- Some people may be of the opinion that inclusive education will waste the learning time available to mainstream learners.
- While difficult and obstinate educators might not readily accept a mentoring system, others may eventually fear that they are “inferior” to their mentors and may therefore eventually develop a low self-esteem and an inferiority complex.

4.12 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The aim of this investigation was to investigate, by means of an opinion survey, what support special needs educators could offer to mainstream educators in a system of inclusive education. In answering this question, one of the respondents in the survey commented by saying that special needs educators should act as advocates and consultants for the implementation of inclusive education.

Some of the problems experienced or foreseen with the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools include a negative attitude of educators towards

inclusive education and the restructuring of mainstream schools that will be required in order to accommodate special needs learners in all these schools in future.

Although there are many problems, one of the major advantages of inclusive education that has been identified, is the creation of an inclusive society free from any discrimination due to any form of disability.

The advantages and disadvantages (problems) of mentoring in a system of inclusive education have also been highlighted in this chapter. Among the advantage is the professional development of mainstream educators in the context of inclusive education. The major problem on the other hand could be the attitude of mainstream educators towards their mentors.

The results of the opinion survey that were discussed in this chapter now need to be interpreted in an inductive manner and in conjunction with the literature study reported in Chapters 2 and 3. This interpretation is done in the next chapter and finally culminates in the formulation of the conclusions and recommendations for this research project.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The findings of the survey that were discussed in Chapter 4 of this study are interpreted in an inductive way in this chapter in conjunction with the literature studies on inclusive education and mentoring that were undertaken in Chapters 2 and 3 of this report.

In order to reach a final conclusion about mentoring by special needs educators as a possible solution for the problems experienced by educators in inclusive education, it is necessary to consider the three research questions that were formulated in paragraph 4.5 of this investigation. The answers to these three questions will provide a basis for both the conclusions and the recommendations that are formulated for various stakeholders.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

As mentioned earlier, the three questions formulated in paragraph 4.5 serve as basis for making conclusions from the research undertaken.

5.2.1 What support could special needs educators offer to mainstream educators in a system of inclusive education?

In Chapter 2 of this report it has become clear that, in the context of the implementation of inclusive education, there is a need for both district and school-based support teams for mainstream educators (see 2.5.1 and 2.5.2). The aim of these support teams would be to coordinate all services; build the capacity of educators and schools; to evaluate programmes; to diagnose effectiveness; to

suggest modifications where necessary; to consider referrals; to address the needs of both educators and learners; and to provide ongoing support (see 2.5.1, 2.5.2, 2.5.3 and 2.5.6). Existing special schools can be used as bases for district support teams and could also serve as resource centres for mainstream schools (see 2.5.1). Support educators (or mentors) can also facilitate interdisciplinary cooperation among educators as well as with other service providers (see 2.5.4) but should always create a climate of trust and confidentiality among educators and other service providers (see 2.5.5).

From the findings of the interview opinion survey that were reported in paragraph 4.11.5 of this report, the support that special needs educators can offer to mainstream educators in a system of inclusive education includes practical assistance in the classroom situation, including the use of special teaching aids, resources and teaching methods for learners with special educational needs and the maintenance of continuous contact between special needs and mainstream educators. Another important aspect of support identified by the respondents was the need to involve special needs educators in the in-service training of mainstream educators.

On the basis of the above-mentioned, the following general conclusion can therefore be formulated:

Special needs educators can be of great help to mainstream educators by providing the necessary support to these educators and becoming involved in the in-service training of mainstream educators. The assistance that special needs educators can provide to mainstream educators is so vast that it may best be done in a mentoring system in which special needs educators can serve as mentors for mainstream educators in the context of inclusive education (also see 5.2.3).

5.2.2 What advantages or problems do mainstream educators usually experience or foresee in a system of inclusive education?

In paragraph 2.2 it became clear that there are a number of *advantages* of inclusive education that can be identified in the literature. These include that inclusive

education caters for the diverse needs of all learners, irrespective of their abilities or background; that it promotes the full development of all learners; that it will change the attitudes of educators and learners toward learners with special needs and consequently free them from any discrimination and harassment; that it ensures maximum participation of special needs learners in educational activities; that it provides support mechanisms to all learners; helps with the elimination of barriers to learning for all learners; and that it will eventually empower all educators and learners.

From the findings reported in paragraph 4.11.6, the advantages that the respondents assigned to inclusive education are as follows: the future interaction of special needs and mainstream learners on an equal footing; the envisaged improvement of facilities and resources at previously disadvantaged schools; the elimination of discrimination against and stigmatisation of learners with special educational needs; the improvement of the awareness of mainstream learners and educators of the needs of learners with special educational needs; the psychological and physical development of special needs learners (including self-confidence) because of their close interaction with mainstream learners; and that mainstream learners will eventually learn to become more grateful for their own talents and abilities.

It should therefore be clear that inclusive education has numerous advantages for mainstream and special needs learners and educators. There are, however, also particular *problems* with the implementation of inclusive education that have been identified in the literature and that have been reported in paragraph 2.4 of this report. Additionally, a number of problems were also identified by the subjects who took part the interview opinion survey (see 4.11.7).

The literature on inclusive education actually revealed a variety of problems associated with the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools. These include the lack of the necessary resources to cater for learners with special educational needs (see 2.4.1); the stress among educators that is associated with inclusive education (caused by several factors such as their preparedness for and natural resistance to change; their reaction to new legislation in this regard; and the demands that inclusive education will make on their conditions of work; see 2.4.2 to

2.4.2.5); their lack of knowledge and skills regarding special needs education (including a lack of the necessary educator support in the context of inclusive education; inadequate facilities, resources, and infrastructure; the potential labelling of special needs learners by mainstream learners; and the possible negative effects inclusive education could have on mainstream learners; see 2.4.3 to 2.4.3.5); and, finally, lack of educator efficacy (see 2.4.4).

The problems identified in the opinion survey include the possible ridicule and embarrassment of special needs learners that may also flow from their interaction with mainstream learners; a lack of funds, resources and facilities to restructure existing mainstream schools in order to cater for learners with special educational needs; the psychological reconditioning that will be required of special needs learners who already have many other problems; the possible retarding of progress among mainstream learners as foreseen by some respondents; a lack of knowledge, skills and expertise in the field of special needs education among mainstream educators and the consequent demand for intensive in-service training in this regard; and the fact that mainstream schools that were designated by the Department of Education to become full inclusive schools as from 2003, were notified of this decision at a very late stage in 2002 (see 4.11.7).

In general, it can therefore be concluded that, despite the very important advantages that are usually mentioned and used for the purpose of advocating inclusive education, there are as many, if not more, problems that have already been identified or are foreseen with the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools. The researcher is therefore of the opinion that, for inclusive education to succeed in mainstream schools, there is a dire need for sufficient support services for mainstream educators in this regard. This opens the door for the institution of, not only support teams and in-service training projects, but also a more intensive and comprehensive mentoring system in which special needs educators can serve as mentors for mainstream educators.

5.2.3 Could mentoring of mainstream educators by special needs educators in a system of inclusive education help to solve the problems experienced by these educators?

In Chapter 3 of this report it was explained that the *purpose* of a mentoring system in the context of inclusive education would be the assistance of mainstream educators (as the mentees) by special needs educators (as the mentors) in their attempts to implement inclusive education in their classrooms. This should happen through the establishment of a professional relationship between the mentors and mentees that will lead to the opportunity for mainstream educators to develop themselves professionally in the field of special needs education; the assessment of the mentee's needs, confidence and competencies in the context of inclusive education; the theoretical and practical coaching of the mentees in the field of special needs education; the guidance of mentees, without denying them the opportunity to take decisions on their own; the institution of team teaching; and effective communication between the mentor and the mentee (see 3.2.2 to 3.2.3.2). It is hoped that this process of mentoring will eventually lead to the personal and professional growth of the mainstream educators and cultivate job satisfaction (see 3.2.2.1 and 3.2.2.7).

In this regard the mentor will have to possess specific qualities such as being committed; being accepting of the mentee; being sufficiently skilled to act as a mentor; being effective in interpersonal contexts; being a model of a lifelong learner; and being able to communicate hope and optimism (see 3.3 to 3.3.6).

The interview opinion survey discussed in Chapter 4 of this report also highlights a number of *advantages* of a mentoring system within the context of inclusive education (see 4.11.8). These include the empowerment of mainstream educators through the reduction of the pressure exerted onto them in the context of inclusive education (because they will be provided with the necessary skills and knowledge, back-up support and practical experiences under the watchful eyes of their mentors); the cultivation of the necessary confidence among mainstream educators to work with and teach learners with special educational needs; and their ability to speed up the process of implementing inclusive education.

It is therefore evident that a mentoring system in the context of inclusive education does have the ability to ease the pressure otherwise exerted onto mainstream educators. However, respondents taking part in the interview opinion survey have also identified a number of *problems* they foresee with such a mentoring system (see 4.11.9). These include a possible lack of special needs educators who have already studied and experienced special needs and inclusive education intensively and who are able to conduct workshops and seminars in this regard; and negative attitudes among mainstream educators towards their mentors (with some believing that inclusive education will waste the time of mainstream learners; some not being cooperative in nature; some being of the opinion that their mentors may not be able to teach them anything new; some being afraid that they are inferior to their mentors and who are therefore developing a low self-esteem and inferiority complex; and others suspicious of their mentors, viewing them as so-called “inspectors” whose real task may be to “spy” on them; see 4.11.9).

In general, the researcher therefore concludes that a mentoring system for mainstream educators in the context of inclusive education does have the potential to ease the problems associated with the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream public schools. In order for such a mentoring system to succeed, however, serious attempts will have to be made to convince and orientate mainstream and special needs educators in this regard. Most of all, the attitudes of these educators will have to be attended to. Because the mentors cannot be there for their mentees forever, other alternatives also have to be implemented. Amongst others, intensive in-service training of mainstream educators will also be essential.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions contained in paragraph 5.2 may have consequences for various stakeholders involved in the context of inclusive education. The recommendations contained in this section are therefore categorised so as to address them to the relevant stakeholders. The researcher hereby expresses the wish that these recommendations will eventually reach the afore-mentioned stakeholders and that

they can be considered in future with the aim of either eradicating or easing the problems experienced by mainstream educators.

5.3.1 The institution of a mentoring system in mainstream schools

Based on the conclusions formulated in paragraphs 5.2.1 and 5.2.3 respectively, the researcher hereby recommends the institution of a mentoring system in the context of inclusive education in South African public schools. Ideally, such a mentoring system should have the following characteristics:

- The mentoring system should be initiated by the provincial Department of Education but it could also be done at district or institutional level.
- The system should form an integral part of the support services provided by the Department of Education in the context of inclusive education. Mentors should therefore have close ties with provincial, district and/or institutional support teams and resource centres.
- Special needs educators should serve as mentors for mainstream educators who have to implement inclusive education for the first time.
- The mentors of mainstream educators should also be, as far as possible, members of provincial, district and/or institutional support teams.
- The mentoring system should continuously communicate hope and optimism among all mainstream and special needs educators (see 3.3.6).
- Mentors should assist mainstream educators in both a theoretical and a practical way on how to identify and teach learners with special educational needs (see 4.11.8).

- Special needs educators who are appointed to act as mentors for mainstream educators should possess certain important qualities such as good interpersonal relations, as well as guiding, demonstrating and workshop skills.

5.3.2 Recommendations for mainstream educators

As explained in paragraphs 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 of this chapter, mainstream educators might be sceptic about inclusive education and the institution of a mentoring system. In this regard the researcher wishes to make the following recommendations to mainstream educators:

- Change in education is inevitable. Mainstream educators and everyone concerned with education therefore have to come to terms with the imminent changes in education. Being open to change minimises stress as opposed to resistance. The main cause of resistance to change is a feeling of insecurity and inadequacy. In this regard Peale (1982:6) says: "If your mind is obsessed by thoughts of insecurity and inadequacy it is, of course, due to the fact that such ideas have dominated your thinking over a long period of time". Mainstream educators should therefore learn to acknowledge and accept changes such as inclusive education and mentoring systems by changing their own thinking.
- To prove that they have changed their attitudes and have accepted inclusive education as inevitable, mainstream educators should start empowering themselves in the field of special needs education. This can be done through further studies in special needs education and support services at higher education institutions (see 2.5.6 and 2.5.7) and by regularly attending workshops, seminars and in-service training sessions related to the implementation of inclusive education.

5.3.3 Recommendations for special needs educators

In a mentoring system such as the one recommended in paragraph 5.3.1, special needs educators will be required to serve as resource persons and provide

continuous support to mainstream educators and even parents. In this regard the following recommendations can be made to these educators:

- Special needs educators should avail themselves to act as mentors for mainstream educators on a voluntary basis.
- They should also make resources available to mainstream educators if the need arises.
- They should develop themselves professionally by furthering their studies in special needs education and support services at higher education institutions (see 2.5.6 and 2.5.7) and by attending workshops, seminars and in-service training sessions on issues such as support services and mentoring.
- They should serve as advocates for inclusive education.
- They should also avail themselves to become members of support teams for and become involved in the in-service training of, mainstream educators with regard to inclusive education.

5.3.4 Recommendations for School Management Teams (SMT's)

As the leadership and management teams of public schools, SMT's are very important stakeholders in inclusive education and the implementation of mentoring systems at their own schools. In this regard the following recommendations can be directed to these management teams:

- The School Management Team should display a vision and sense of purpose with regard to inclusive education. They must also act as advocates of inclusive education and mentoring.
- They also need to empower themselves professionally in the field of special needs education and support services. This could be done by enrolling for

certificate, diploma and/or degree programmes in this field at higher education institutions (see 2.5.6 and 2.5.7) and/or by attending workshops, seminars or in-service training sessions in this regard.

- SMT's need to continuously support the actions of provincial, district and institutional support teams and mentors.
- They should also initiate the institution of educator support teams and a mentoring system at their own schools, especially if these initiatives are not forthcoming from the other education authorities.
- SMT's of mainstream and special schools and resource centres should make their special needs educators available to act as mentors for mainstream educators who have no background and experience in special needs education. This may mean that the workload of these mentors will have to be reduced accordingly.
- SMT's should sensitise members of their own School Governing Bodies (SGB's) of the importance of inclusive education and the need for educator support teams, a mentoring system and in-service training of mainstream educators.

5.3.5 Recommendations for School Governing Bodies (SGB's)

As far as the School Governing Bodies of mainstream and special schools are concerned, the following recommendations can be formulated:

- It is the duty of SGB's to ensure that quality education is provided for all learners at their respective schools. They have to support the SMT, the educators and other staff members to strive towards this goal.
- SGB's should actively support the institution of a mentoring system for mainstream educators as well as the in-service training of these educators in the

context of inclusive education. This might mean that they will have to provide the human, financial and/or material resources to make these actions possible.

- SGB members could also be sensitised on the importance of issues such as inclusive education, mentoring and in-service training through a system of in-service training, workshops and/or seminars for SGB members.

5.3.6 Recommendations for other education authorities

For the purpose of this investigation the term *other education authorities* refers to district offices, provincial education departments, the national Department of Education and the Ministry of Education. The following recommendations are directed to the afore-mentioned authorities:

- Education authorities should provide support services to mainstream educators who have to implement inclusive education in their classrooms for the first time. This should be done through the formal establishment of resource centres, educator support teams, a mentoring system for mainstream educators, as well as the in-service training of mainstream educators in the field of inclusive education at provincial, district and/or institutional level.
- The success of these support services will depend on particular approaches that are used by these authorities. In this regard mainstream and special needs educators should be involved in the processes of deciding, planning and implementing these services. It is important for mainstream and special needs educators at institutional level to feel that the new system has not been imposed on them.
- Education authorities will have to launch a more intensive advocacy campaign on inclusive education than has been the case up to now. For this advocacy campaign to succeed, it should emphasise the importance of support services for mainstream educators in a system of inclusive education and it should involve both mainstream and special needs school educators in all its stages of operation.

- Education authorities will have to pay special attention to the provision of all types of resources, facilities, infrastructures and other aids that will be required by mainstream educators and schools that accommodate learners with special educational needs. In this regard a policy of redress of the imbalances of the past should also be considered.
- Due to the fact that inclusive education is a new paradigm shift in the system of education, education authorities should be urged to support all efforts done by academic institutions to perform research on mentoring systems and inclusive education. This could be done by means of bursaries for prospective postgraduate students who wish to engage in this type of research.

5.4 SUMMARY AND FINAL REMARKS

In this chapter the final conclusions and recommendations, based on the entire literature study, as well as the opinion survey of the respondents, have been discussed. The conclusions were based on the three research questions formulated in paragraph 4.5 of this investigation and mainly revolve around mentoring by special needs educators as a possible solution for the problems experienced by educators in inclusive education.

The major conclusion the researcher has made was that the mentoring of mainstream educators by special needs educators in the context of inclusive education is a viable option. In order for such a mentoring system to succeed, serious attempts will have to be made to convince and orientate mainstream and special needs educators in this regard. Most of all, the attitudes of these educators will have to be attended to. As the mentors cannot be there for their mentees forever, other alternatives also have to be implemented. Amongst others, intensive in-service training of mainstream educators will also be essential.

It can therefore be inferred from this investigation that, although a mentoring system may be a necessity, there are many other aspects that have far reaching implications and that need to be taken into account when implementing inclusive education.

A number of recommendations for different stakeholders were eventually formulated in this chapter. It is hoped that all these recommendations will be to the benefit of education in general and, particularly, that it will serve to ultimately ensure the success of inclusive education in South Africa.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEWS WITH MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATORS/OFFICIALS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING A MENTORING SYSTEM IN THIS REGARD

(Note: The purpose of the interviews was explained to all interviewees. Permission was obtained from all interviewees to audiotape their interviews. It was also explained to them that they, as well as their respective institutions, would remain anonymous at all times. The questions listed below have been adjusted, depending on whether the interviewees were mainstream or special needs educators/officials)

1. Do you know what inclusive education is?
(If a respondent did not know what inclusive education was, the concept was explained to him/her)
2. How do you feel about the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools in South Africa?
3. Do you experience/foresee any problems with the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools? If so, what are/would these problems be?
4. Do you experience/foresee any advantages with the implementation of inclusive education mainstream schools? If so, what are/would these advantages be?
5. What must be done to ensure that inclusive education is accepted and supported by mainstream educators?
6. Do you know what mentoring is?
(If a respondent did not know what mentoring was, the concept was explained to him/her)
7. How would you feel about the introduction of a mentoring system in South African public schools as a method of assisting mainstream educators with the implementation of inclusive education in their own schools?
8. Do you foresee any problems with the implementation of such a mentoring system in order to assist mainstream educators with the implementation of inclusive education in their own schools and classrooms?
If so, what would these problems be?

9. Do you foresee any advantages of the implementation of such a mentoring system in order to assist mainstream educators with the implementation of inclusive education in their own schools and classrooms?
If so, what would these advantages be?
10. What must be done to ensure that such a mentoring system is accepted and supported by mainstream educators?
11. What do you think of the possibility of using educators with special needs training and experience as mentors of the mainstream educators who have to implement inclusive education for the first time?
12. What possible support do you think can or should be provided by the mentors of mainstream educators who have to implement inclusive education for the first time?

APPENDIX B

FREE STATE PROVINCE



Enquiries :Mrs M V Wessels/
Reference no. :16/4/1/40

Tel : (051) 404 8075
Fax : (051) 4048074

2002-10-07

Mr T S Lefuo
c/o Dr SP van Tonder
Department of Education
Vista University, Bloemfontein Campus
P O Box 380
Bloemfontein
9300

Dear Mr Lefuo

REGISTRATION OF RESEARCH PROJECT

1. This letter is in reply to your application for the registration of your research project.
2. Research topic: **MENTORING BY SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATORS AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION FOR THE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY EDUCATORS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**
3. Your research project has been registered and you may conduct research in the Free State Department of Education under the following conditions:
 - 3.1 Educators participate voluntarily in the project.
 - 3.2 The names of the schools and principals involved remain confidential.
 - 3.3 The interviews take place outside the normal tuition time of the school.
 - 3.5 This letter is shown to all participating persons.
4. You are requested to donate a report on this study to the Free State Department of Education. It will be placed in the Education Library, Bloemfontein.
5. Once your project is complete, we should appreciate it if you would present your findings to the relevant persons in the FS Department of Education. This will increase the possibility of implementing your findings wherever possible.
6. Would you please write a letter **accepting the above conditions**? Address this letter to:

The Head: Education, for attention: CES: IRRISS
Room 1213, C R Swart Building
Private Bag X20565, BLOEMFONTEIN, 9301
7. We wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

HEAD: EDUCATION