CHAPTER TWO

THE MEANING OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men - the balance-wheel of the social machinery.

Horace Mann

2.1 INTRODUCTION

An historical background is necessary to understand the rationale for Inclusive Education for learners who are in need of diverse education. For many years disadvantaged learners (or learners who experience barriers to learning) in South Africa received inadequate or no educational provision at all. Specialized education and support were only provided for a small percentage of learners with disabilities within 'special' schools and classes. The majority of learners with disabilities either fell outside of the system or have been 'mainstreamed by default'. The education system and the curriculum as a whole have generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population. As a result, there were massive dropouts, push-outs, and failures. 'Special needs and support' had been seriously neglected (White Paper 6, Department of Education, 2001).

This demonstrates that it became inevitable that South Africa needed to transform from 'special and ordinary' education to an inclusive outcomes-based approach to education, which would be able to embrace all 'normal and special learners' in schools. Apartheid era education in South Africa promoted divisions based on race, class, disability, gender and ethnicity instead of unity amongst citizens belonging to one nation (cf. 1.1).

Inclusive Education, on the other hand, operates from the premise that almost all learners should start in a general classroom, and then, depending on their needs, move into more re-structured environments (Dyson and Millward, 2000:20; Dinnebeil and Mcinerney, 2001:263; Odom, 2002:12). Research shows that Inclusive Education helps the development of learners in the following ways:

- Learners with specific challenges make gains in cognition and social development and physical motor skills. They do well when the general environment is adjusted to meet their needs (Gately and Gately, 2001:41) and

- Learners with more typical development challenges gain higher levels of tolerance for the people with differences. They learn to make the most of those they interact with (Hall and McGregor, 2000:114).

The above paragraphs highlight that, in an inclusive classroom, the philosophy of inclusion hinges on helping learners and educators to become better members of a community by creating new visions for communities and for schools in particular. Inclusion, in this context, is about membership and belonging to a community. White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) states that Inclusive Education and training includes:

- acknowledging that all learners and youths can learn and that all learners and youths need support; and

- accepting and respecting the fact that learners are different in some ways and have different learning needs, which should be valued equally and should become an ordinary part of human beings' experiential living.

This means that education and school structures, systems and learning methodologies must meet all learners 'needs at various educational levels and kinds of learning support. Educators must, in this regard, acknowledge and respect the differences in learners, whether due to:

- age;

- gender;

- ethnicity;

- language;

- class;

- disability; and/or

- HIV status

(Allen and Schwartz, 2001: 54; Daniels and Vaughn, 1999: 48; Nagata, 2003; Munoz, 2007).

Inclusive Education is presented as a broader than formal schooling in that:

- it acknowledges that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal modes and structures (Beverly and Thomas, 1999: 179; UNESCO, 2009, 2010);

- educators are expected to change attitudes, behaviours, teaching methodologies, curricula and environments to meet the needs of all learners

- (De Bettencourt, 1999:27; UNESCO, 2009, 2010);

- participation of learners must be maximized in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and must uncover and minimize barriers to learning (Rafferty, Leinenbach and Helms, 1999: 51; UNESCO, 2009, 2010);

- learners must be empowered by developing their individual strengths and by enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning; and

- some learners may require more intense and specialized forms of learning support to be able to develop to their full potential (McConnell, 1999: 14; UNESCO, 2009, 2010).

Based on the above list, the vision for Inclusive Education in South Africa can be described as the practice of promoting the participation and competence of every learner, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability and HIV status. The aim is to form an inclusive society in which differences are respected and valued, and where discrimination and prejudice is actively combated in policies and practices (Lieberman and Houston-Wilson, 1999: 129; Lipsky and Gartner, 1998: 78; UNICEF, 2009).

However, an Inclusive Education system can only be created if ordinary schools become more inclusive. Schools must become better at educating 'all' learners in

their communities regardless of the challenges that they might be facing. Educating all learners in their communities must be their first priority. The UNESCO Conference (2008a) proclaimed that: '…ordinary schools which embark on educating learners with the principles of Inclusive Education have the most effective way of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all learners in their communities.' These schools can provide effective education to most of these learners and can improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

UNESCO (2008b) specifies policy tools for addressing the needs of four groups of learners who are known worldwide to be excluded from schools. These groups include the following:

- Girls (exclusion due to gender): Most girls in communities of third world nations are excluded from schools.

- Learner labourers: In third world countries, most families require learners to supplement the income of the family. Therefore, learners have to find work as labourers in order to fulfil their roles in their families.

- Learners affected by HIV/AIDS: The stigma of HIV and AIDS in schools ultimately makes learners run away from school, when the school sends them away from school due perpetual absenteeism, when parents do not protest against this and when the educators' attitude is negative towards these learners.

- Learners with disability: Inaccessible infrastructure is a major problem, in general, as there are no funds to rework the school building in order to accommodate learners with disabilities.

In the light of the preceding statements, inclusion is regarded as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners, both youths and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities. It reduces and eliminates exclusion within and from education in all respects. It also involves changing and modifying the content, approaches, structures and quality of education. This is done with the common vision of including all learners of the appropriate age range in the same grade in the school. Schools must have the

conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular school system to educate all learners of all the communities in the world (UNESCO, 2003b).

There are several reasons to justify Inclusive Education in schools, this includes:

- Educational justification: Inclusive schools are required to educate all learners together. This means that they have to develop ways of teaching that respond to individual differences.

- Social justification: Inclusive schools are able to change attitudes toward diversity by educating all learners together in the classroom of teaching and learning. This forms the basis for a just and non-discriminatory society.

- Economic justification: It is cheaper to establish and maintain schools that educate all learners together instead of setting-up complex systems of different types of schools, which specialize in different groups of learners (UNESCO, 2003b).

Several UNESCO documents form the basis for the development of Inclusive Education policies and approaches. These documents set out the central elements that need to be addressed in order to ensure:

- the right to access to education,

- the right to quality education; and

- the right to respect in the learning environment.

The South African Department of Education Policy guidelines on Inclusive Education (2005) highlights the Education For All (EFA) movement's concern is with Inclusive Education being linked to quality education. Although there is not a single universally accepted definition of quality education, three important components are mostly incorporated in such conceptual frameworks namely:

- Quality education is education that is concerned with the cognitive development of the learner.

- Quality education that promotes values and attitudes of responsible citizens.

- Creative and emotional development of the learner.

The departure points of an Inclusive Education and training system as put forward in White Paper 6 (2001) are the following:

- Revise existing policies and legislation for all bands of education and training, and the framework for governance and organization.

- Strengthen district-based education support services.

- Expand accessibility and provision of services.

- Support curriculum development and assessment, institutional development and quality improvement and assurance.

- A national awareness, advocacy and mobilization campaign.

- Strategies for the revision of funding.

White Paper 6 (2001) acknowledges that many of the barriers to learning put forward in the White Paper are addressed by many other national and provincial programmes of the Department of Education, Health , Welfare and Public Works in particular. In the case of the Department of Education, the Tirisano programme, District Development Programme, Curriculum 2005, the Language-in-Education Policy, Systemic Evaluation (of the attainment of Grade 3), the HIV and AIDS Life Skills Programme and the joint programmes with the Business Trust on school efficiency and quality improvement are examples of programmes that are already seeking to uncover and remove barriers to learning experienced by learners in the mainstream.

The Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2005) stresses that learner's with barriers to learning includes individuals with diverse characteristics and backgrounds. Therefore, it should be clearly understood that the strategies to improve the quality of education should be focused on improving learners' knowledge and strengths (UNESCO, 2005).

From this point of view, the report suggests five different dimensions that must be addressed in the context of the teaching and learning processes in the classroom in order to understand; monitor and improve the quality of education.

- The differences in learner characteristics.

- The contexts in which the content is presented.

- The ways to enable inputs and full participation.

- The teaching and learning in the classroom.

- The expected outcomes of the learning situation

(UNESCO, 2005: 35-37).

These dimensions are interrelated and interdependent and need to be addressed in an integrated manner. It must also be understood that educating all learners in the classroom of teaching and learning is a global human right. All learners have the right to be educated.

The following extracts present direct quotes from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ratified 1948.

2.2 UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The nations of the world made a Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserting that "everyone has the right to education" more than 40 years ago. Notable efforts were made by countries around the globe to ensure the right to education for all, however there were still many challenges (UNESCO, 1948). The following were noted:

- At least 60 million girls and more than 100 million learners have no access to primary education.

- Two-thirds of women and 960 million adults are illiterate. Functional illiteracy is a serious problem in all countries, industrialised and developing.

- Printed knowledge, new skills and technology which can enhance the quality of life and help adapt to social and cultural change had not been accessed by more than one-third of the adult population.

- Failures to complete basic education programmes number more than 100 million learners and countless adults; attendance requirements are satisfied by millions but they do learn the necessary knowledge and skills.

(UNESCO, 1948).

The afore-mentioned challenges resulted in the participants of the World Conference on Education for all in Thailand, (1990) to make the following declarations:

- Recall that it is a fundamental right for all the people, women and men of all ages to be educated throughout the world.

- Know that education is the key to personal and social improvement.

- Understand that education can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while contributing to social, economic and cultural progress, tolerance and international co-operation.

- Recognise that traditional knowledge and indigenous cultural heritage have a value and validity in their own right and a capacity to define and promote development.

- Acknowledge that the provision of education is seriously deficient. It must be more relevant and must improve qualitatively. It must be universally available.

- Recognise that basic education must be sound. This is fundamental to the strengthening of higher levels of education, scientific, technological literacy and capacity. Thus fundamental to self-reliance and development.

- Recognise that it is necessary to give to the present and coming generations an expanded vision, and a renewed commitment to basic education in order to address the scale and complexity of the challenges.

(UNESCO, 1990; UN, 2007; UNICEF, 2009)

At this conference in Thailand (UNESCO, 1990) a proclamation was made to:

2.2.1 Meet the Basic Learning Needs

Every person, learner, youth and adult should benefit from the educational opportunities that are designed to meet the basic learning needs. These are made-up of learning tools such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving. Knowledge, skills, values and attitudes are also necessary tools required for the survival of human beings in order to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity. Full participation in development is needed to improve the quality of lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning (UNESCO, 1990; UNICEF, 2009).

The satisfaction of the basic learning needs empowers individuals in any society and gives them the knowledge worth exchanging with people within their communities. The knowledge they acquire brings upon them the responsibility to respect and build upon their collective cultural, linguistic and spiritual heritage, to promote the education of others and to further the cause of social justice and to achieve environmental protection. It enables them to be tolerant towards social, political and religious systems that differ from their own, to ensure that commonly accepted humanistic values and human rights are upheld, and to work for international peace and solidarity in an interdependent world (UNESCO, 1990; UN, 2007; UNICEF, 2009).

Another important aim of educational development is the transmission and enrichment of common cultural and moral values. It is in these values that the individual and society find their identity and worth. It is the foundation for lifelong learning and human development on which countries may build and further the levels and types of education and training (UNESCO, 1990; UN, 2007; UNICEF, 2009).

Therefore, the educational vision must expand to the required proportion of renewed commitment in the whole education system, where all the role players work together to make all the necessary adjustments in areas affecting effective diverse learning in Inclusive Education.

2.2.1.1 Expand the vision and renew the commitment

To serve the basic learning needs an 'expanded vision' is required to surpass present resource levels, institutional structures, curricula and conventional delivery systems while building on the best in current practice. The vision must expand to the universal access and promotion of equity. The focus must be on learning and broadening the means and scope of basic education, enhancing the environment for learning and strengthening partnerships (UNESCO, 1990; UN. 2007; UNICEF, 2009).

2.2.1.2 Universal access and promotion of equity

All learners, the youth and adults must have access to basic education and measures to reduce disparities must be taken into consideration. For the purpose of establishing equity, they must all be given opportunities to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning. Priority must be given to the education of girls and women, and to remove all obstacles that may be in the way for their active participation. Gender stereotype must be eliminated in education. Disadvantaged groups of people such as the poor, street and working learners, rural and remote populations, nomads and migrant workers, indigenous people, ethnic, racial, linguistic minorities, refugees, people displaced by war and people under occupation should not be discriminated against in accessing learning opportunities. Diverse needs demand special attention and steps must be taken to provide equal access to education for people including the disabled (UNESCO, 1990; UNESCO, 2001; UNICEF, 2009).

2.2.1.3 Focus on learning

Active and participatory approaches are important in ensuring the acquisition of knowledge and allowing learners to fulfil their potential. Therefore, curricula must be adapted to acceptable levels of learning acquisition. Improved and appropriate systems for assessing learning achievement must be applied (UNESCO, 1990; UNESCO, 2006).

2.2.1.4 Broaden the means and scope for basic education

The diversity, complexity and changing nature of basic learning require constant redefining of the scope of basic education to include the following components:

- **Learning begins at birth.** Provision of educational services must involve the arrangement of families, communities and institutions as deemed appropriate (UNESCO, 1990; UNESCO, 2007).

- **The primary school is the main channel of delivery for the basic education of learners outside the family.** Adequate provision of primary education must be available to all learners of the world, taking into consideration their culture, needs and opportunities in the communities (UNESCO, 1990; UNESCO, 2008).

- **The diverse needs of adults and the youth should be met through a variety of delivery systems.** Literacy is an important skill and it is the foundation of other life skills. Mother-tongue literacy strengthens cultural identity and heritage (UNESCO, 1990; UNESCO, 2010).

- **People should be educated by using available resources of information. Communication and social action on social issues.** People must be mobilized to use their traditional resources and the media, such as libraries, radio and television in order to meet the needs of basic education for all the people (UNESCO, 1990; World Bank, 2008).

2.2.1.5 Enhance the environment for learning

Societies must ensure that all learners receive the nutrition, health care and general physical and emotional support they need in order to participate actively in and benefit from their education because learning does not take place in isolation. Knowledge and skills that will enhance the learning of a vibrant and warm environment of learners should be integrated into community learning programmes for adults too (UNESCO, 1990; UNESCO, 2008; UNESCO, 2009).

2.2.1.6 Strengthen partnerships

National, regional, and local educational authorities have a unique responsibility to provide basic education for all, but it is not humanly possible to expect them to supply every human, financial and organizational requirement for this task. Therefore, it is necessary to have new and revitalized partnerships at all levels in order to achieve the objectives.

Partnerships with all sub-sectors and forms of education should be strengthened, recognizing the special role of educators and that of administrators and other educational personnel. There must be partnerships between education and other government departments, including planning, finance, labour, communications and other social sectors. There must also be partnerships between government and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local communities, religious groups, and families. The recognition of the role of both families and educators is important (UNESCO, 1990; UNESCO, 2009).

2.2.1.7 Develop a supportive policy in specific context

Policies to support the social, cultural, and economic sectors are required in order to realize the full provision and utilization of basic education for the individual and the improvement of the society. Effective provision of basic education is dependant on political commitment for the educational policy to reform and strengthen institutions. Suitable economic, trade, labour, employment and health policies enhance learners' incentives and contribute to societal development (UNESCO, 1990; UNESCO, 2009).

2.2.1.8 Mobilize resources

For the basic learning needs of all the people to be met, a much broader scope of action than that of the past will be essential to mobilise the existing and new financial and human resources, public, private and voluntary. All communities must contribute and must recognize that time energy and funding directed to basic education are probably the most profound investment in people and in the future. We must draw on the resources of all the government agencies responsible for human development through increased absolute and proportional allocations to basic education services

with the clear recognition of competing claims on national resources of which education is an important one, but not the only one. Improvement in the efficiency of existing educational resources and programmes will bear more fruit and thus attract new resources. One way in which we can urgently meet the requirements of basic learning needs may be reallocation between sectors, for example, a transfer from military to educational expenditure (UNESCO, 1990; UNESCO, 2009).

2.2.1.9 Strengthen international solidarity

Meeting basic learning needs requires a common and universal human responsibility. It requires international solidarity and equitable and fair economic relations in order to redress existing economic disparities. All nations have valuable knowledge and experiences to share in order to design effective educational policies and programmes. Substantial and long-term increases in resources for basic education will be needed. The world communities, including intergovernmental agencies and institutions, have an urgent responsibility to alleviate the challenges that prevent some countries from achieving the goal of education for all (UNESCO, 1990, 2009; UNICEF, 2009).

The Education for All movement was a preparation for the Salamanca conference, UNESCO that focused on special needs education issues. However, for learners to benefit from these initiatives, quality education must be accessible to all learners.

2.3 ACCESS AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION

According to Policy guidelines on inclusion in education (draft on Inclusive Education, DoE, 2005), access to education and quality are linked and are mutual in reinforcing Inclusive Education. Large numbers of learners in the classroom affect quality learning in the short term but long-term strategies for improving learning may succeed in restoring the required balance. Although, enhancing cognitive development, basic skills, physical health and emotional growth are considered part of the affective domain of a learner, these factors are equally important in the learning process and in reinforcing the quality of a learning experience. On management level, planning, implementing and monitoring of the progress of these interventions may present an enormous challenge in schools.

However, access and quality of education in Inclusive Education require finances for stakeholders to be able to undertake all the inclusive requirements within its eco-systems.

2.4 ISSUES OF COST AND INCLUSION

Issues of cost and inclusion go together. It is difficult to speak about inclusion without any consideration of cost issues. National budgets often have insufficient funds to allocate to the inclusion budget and parents very often cannot afford the direct and indirect costs of education. Families often have to prioritize between sending a learner to school and having him/her adding to the income to feed the family. There is a risk, therefore, that Inclusive Education is considered too costly for governments, agencies and even parents.

Shocking estimates made by Oxfam (UNESCO, 2007) stated that the financial support needed to reach Education for All (EFA) corresponds to:

- four days worth of global military spending throughout the world;

- half of the money spent on learners' toys in the United States of America every year;

- a smaller amount than what Europeans spend on computer games or mineral water per year; and

- less than 0.1 percent of the annual gross national products of the world.

However, a lot of money could be recovered through developing a more cost-efficient education system. The context of institutions in which public spending is required needs more attention than it has received so far (UNESCO, 2007). This includes the optimum use of resources in order to achieve a higher cost-benefit relationship between inputs and results. Research has shown that in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, between 5 percent and 40 percent of students drop out, resulting in low skills and high rates of unemployment (OECD, 2008:9). Among those who drop out from schools are many learners with negative learning experiences and a history of having to repeat the same grade because of poor performance.

The improvement of the quality education for all is a better way to spend money than aiming at spending it on learners who have to repeat a grade, bearing in mind that repetition has a very low impact on the level of improved learner success but it has a very negative effect on learners' self-esteem. Investment in quality education should also include educators' training, supply of teaching and learning material, Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), and the provision of additional support for learners who have trouble in the education process (OECD, 2008).

According to Huston (2010), inclusion has remained a controversial concept in education because it represents a relationship between educational and social values, as well as to the sense of individual worth. Discussions about Inclusive Education should address key issues such as:

- valuing all learners;

- the meaning of inclusion; and

- learners for whom inclusion is inappropriate.

Advocates are on both sides of the issue. Slee (2001) views inclusion as a policy driven by an unrealistic expectation that money will be saved. In addition, trying to force all learners into the inclusion mode is just as coercive and discriminatory as trying to force all learners into the mode of a special education class.

On the other side are advocates those who believe that all students belong in the regular education classroom, and that 'good' educators are those who can meet the needs of all the learners, regardless of what those needs may be. Between the two extremes groups are large groups of educators and parents who are perplexed by the concept of inclusion itself. They do not know whether inclusion is legally required or whether that is what is the best for learners. They also ask questions on what schools and school personnel must do to meet the needs of learners with disabilities (Huston, 2010)

However, interventions to promote inclusion do not need to be costly. Several cost-effective measures to promote inclusive quality education have been developed in countries with scarce resources. These include multi-grade, multi-age and multi-

ability classrooms, initial literacy in mother tongues, training-of-trainer models for professional development, linking students in pre-service educator training with schools, peer teaching and converting special schools into resource centres that provide expertise and support to clusters of regular schools (OECD, 2008).

Jamaica is a good example of early intervention, which shows the cost effectiveness of inclusive approaches. An Early Intervention Project for learners with disabilities that were home-based was developed in Jamaica. The parents were relied on to provide the services for their learners after being trained. The cost was US $300 per year per learner. This was less than the cost of special education. In Latin America, research showed that repetition of the grade of a learner who fails implies a cost of US $5.6 billion in primary school and US $5.5 billion in secondary school at the exchange rate in the year 2000 (UNESCO, 2007).

Research has also indicated that educational quality does not directly depend on educational cost. In quality education learning outcomes are related much more to the quality of teaching than to other factors such as class size or classroom diversity. In fact, a typical feature for the best performing school systems is that, in different ways, they take responsibility for educating and supporting all students despite the diversity in the classroom. The best school systems find different ways to support learners flexibly within the mainstream classrooms (Savolainen, 2009).

Lack of investment in education as a preparation for an active and productive adult life can be very costly and profoundly irrational in economic terms. A Canadian study showed that the loss in production of persons with disabilities that is kept outside of the labour and market amounts to 7.7% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ($55.8 billion). Therefore, large amounts of money can be invested in facilitating education that could lead to persons who are disabled being employable.

Whether there is investment or not, schools' attitudes must change to that of seeing themselves as a necessity for the community in order to fully accommodate learners with diverse learning needs. A discussion of the Salamanca conference on special needs education follows.

2.5 THE SALAMANCA CONFERENCE

The Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (1994) became a new point of departure for millions of learners who were denied of education throughout the world. It placed special needs education within a wider framework of Education For All (E.F.A.), a movement launched in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990.

2.5.1 The main goals of the Salamanca Conference

The main goals of the conference were the inclusion of all the learners of the world in schools and the reformation of the school system to make it possible. It called for major policy and resource changes in the countries of the world, the setting of national targets, and partnerships between all the national and international agencies involved (UNESCO, 1994).

This conference provided a platform to affirm the principle of Inclusive Education and discussion of the practice to ensure that learners with special needs are included in these initiatives and take their rightful place in a learning society. Experience has shown that special educational needs are easily overlooked.

2.5.2 The concept "special education needs'

A significant number of the millions of learners in the world, who have no access to education, are believed to have special educational needs. Special education is defined in terms of learners with a range of physical, sensory, intellectual or emotional difficulties (UNESCO, 1994; UNICEF, 2009).

In the last 15 to 20 years, it has become clear that the concept of special needs has to be widened to include all learners who, for whatever reason are failing to benefit from education. To add to that, there are learners with impairments and disabilities who are prevented from attending their local schools. In addition there are millions of learners who are:

- experiencing challenges which may be temporary or permanent in school;

- not motivated or interested in learning;

- forced to repeat grades and are able to complete only one or two years of primary education;

- forced to work due to circumstances beyond their control;

- living on the streets;

- living far away from school;

- living in extreme poverty or are suffering from malnutrition;

- victims of armed conflict and war;

- suffering from continuous physical, emotional and sexual abuse; and

- simply not attending school for whatever reason

(UNESCO, 1994; UNICEF, 2009).

The researcher is of the opinion that the above-mentioned learners are denied the opportunity to learn and to gain the knowledge, understanding and skills to which they are entitled. It is clear that the origin of their difficulties lies not just in themselves but also in the social environments in which they are living. Our future task is to identify ways in which the school, as part of the social environment, can create better learning opportunities for all learners. In this way, the challenges of learning difficulties brought about by the school system itself can be addressed.

It is important for UNESCO to organize regional seminars so that the challenges affecting specific regions could be highlighted, and to find common ground for all regions, so that solutions could be applied across the globe. A discussion of the regional seminars follows.

2.5.3 Regional seminars organized by UNESCO

The five regional seminars organized by UNESCO served as an important element in the preparation for the World Conference in 1992-1993. The Swedish government supported the seminars that were held in Botswana, (eight countries participated);

Venezuela, (five countries participated); Jordan, (six countries participated); Austria, (five countries participated) and China (twelve countries participated).

The purpose of the seminars was to bring together senior education decision-makers from the regions, including officials with the responsibility for primary and special education. The seminars also mobilized policy and professional support for pupils with special educational needs within the regular school system. The seminar reports that were published provided an invaluable source of information on the trends at national, regional and global levels. They constituted a useful baseline against which to monitor and evaluate progress over the next decade and beyond (UNESCO, 1993; UNICEF, 2007).

The following key themes recurred in the seminars:

- Creating inclusive schools that will cater for a wide range of pupils' needs should be given high priority. This may be facilitated by :

    o a common administrative structure for special and regular education;

    o special education support to regular schools; and

    o curriculum and teaching methods that suit the needs of the learners in the classroom.

- Educators' education must also be adapted to promote Inclusive Education to facilitate collaboration between regular and special education educators. This concerns both the general pre-service educator education and specialist in-service education.

- Inclusive Education pilot projects should be established and carefully evaluated in the light of the local needs, resources and services. Evaluated information can guide policy and practice in key ways and can be disseminated both within countries and to other countries that share similar circumstances (UNESCO, 1994, 2008; UNICEF, 2007).

UNESCO has developed educator educational resource packs and material that accompany the educator innovative project. Its aim is to help educators to develop

their thinking and practice regarding ways in which school systems and individual educators can better meet the needs of all pupils having trouble in learning, including pupils with disabilities.

As stated in introduction and statement of the problem of this research study (1.1), South Africa responded positively and started its journey from exclusion to Inclusive Education. The challenges in the schools of Inclusive Education are accommodating all trends of differences between learners with diverse learning needs in the classroom. The following paragraph discusses how these challenges may be overcome by applying the principles of inclusion and knowledge on learners' differences.

2.6 TRENDS OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LEARNERS

Inclusive Education is founded on the ideal of teaching the entire class. According to Smith (2000:54, UNICEF, 2007, 2009), all learners given the right social and learning support can learn. There are many reasons for teaching the entire class. The most important reasons are:

2.6.1 All learners can learn

This notion is based on the idea that learners can study foreign languages, Mathematics and Science. They can also learn to write. According to this notion, all learners, even learners with learning disabilities except those with extensive brain damage, can learn to do all these things. The only problem could be that they cannot study material in the generally prescribed way (Lieberman and Houston-Wilson, 1999: 129; Reid and Valle, 2005).

2.6.2 Learners cannot all learn in a prescribed way

From time immemorial, learners have been taught by using prescribed ways. Teaching methods have always focused on the best way to teach a learner in specific subjects. Very few of those methods have been focused on how to teach specific kinds of learners. There has been a search for a 'magic' method from which all learners will learn. Educators have found some methods that are more useful than others. Often educators have intuitively taught individual learners by adapting the

method for the learners in their classroom, yet they have claimed that their success is due to the method itself. The reality is that no single teaching method fits all learners, and it is not likely that such a miracle method will be discovered or invented (Pfeiffer and Cundari, 1999: 109; Dyck and Pemberton, 2002).

2.6.3 Unmotivated learners do not exist

Learners who are not motivated do not exist. Many learners are unmotivated by educators who do not understand them, parents who do not know how to help, peers who learn faster and curricular materials oriented toward another kind of a learner, but initially they all want to learn. When the barriers to learning are removed motivation will often return (Corbett, 2001: 58; Salend, 2004).

2.6.4 Educators should render assistance to learners, they should not give up on them

The fact that learners can learn, means that educators must help them. Learners who are unmotivated and reach secondary school present greater challenges to their educators than the unmotivated learners in an earlier age group. Secondary school educators who are not successful in motivating or re-motivating learners do not create any challenges for their successors; in fact, there will be no successors because unmotivated learners do not enrol in universities. It is time for every person to achieve access to Inclusive Education (Dinnebell, 2000: 20; Thomas and Loxley, 2001).

2.6.5 Learners' success has to do more with the way they are taught than with innate ability

There are gifted learners who drop out of school. However, learners with disabilities may learn well. Learners who perform well in one class may do extremely badly in another class. In many cases, the cause of poor performance is not inherent to the learner, but rather the result of a conflict between the learning style and strategy of the learner and the style of the educator, the learning materials, or the majority of the learners' peers. In other words, 'style wars' are being waged in the classroom (Dieker, 2001: 93; Tomlinson and Eidson, 2003; Tomlinson et al., 2002).

2.6.6 'Style wars' can be won

Winning the 'style wars' first requires an awareness of learning styles. Two learners can be very much alike, yet very different. Being aware that learners differ, creates a requirement to arrange the input and activities in order for them to be able to learn differently. Reacting to the awareness of learning differences sets up the conditions needed for success in the classroom (Kohler, Anthony, Steighner and Hoyson, 2001: 93).

2.6.7 The chaos in the field of learner differences can be organized

Generally speaking, the field of learner differences is relatively new. If an organization is termed chaotic, a number of systems can be proposed to help order the chaos. These systems stem from three kinds of brain dominances, as proposed by Meyer (2001: 10) to four kinds of cognitive styles as suggested by Freeman and Aikin (2000: 10) to seven multiple intelligences as proposed by Daniels (1998: 27). These are old systems that are still in use today, and many educators are just beginning to implement them, although it is known that these very simple designs inadequately describe the complexity of learner differences. Some of these designs, such as whole brain learning (McGregor and Vogelsberg, 1998; Collins, 2003) and Multiple intelligences (Snell and Janney, 2000; Thomas and Loxley, 2001), are prescribed approaches dictating classroom practices. There are also descriptive approaches dictating classroom practices.

When educators develop the ability to facilitate learning, they usually find solutions to the 'style wars' that are more situationally appropriate and more effective than prior practices. Some educators find the broad array of learning styles easier to understand and to manage if types of learning styles (Befring, 1997; Gallagher, 2004) group the various systems. The groups that are found to be most useful and clustered learner differences are put in four categories as follows:

- Sensory modalities - This is when learners perceive and take in information through different physical channels. The common ones are visual, auditory and motor learning styles. These are briefly discussed.

o   Visual learners acquire new information through sight. Distinctions that are important to visual learners include brightness, size, colour, saturation, distance, clarity, contrast, texture, frame and symmetry. Visual learners can be subdivided into two groups, Verbalists who see words and Imagists who see pictures (Coombs-Richardson and Mead, 2001). For example, in Learning English as Second Language (ESL) or a foreign language, Verbalists use different strategies from imagists. If Verbalists want to remember the French word: '*lune*' for the English word moon, they see the letters l-u-n-e in their heads, whereas imagists will associate it with an image of the moon (Coombs-Richardson and Mead, 2001; Destefano, Shriner and Lloyd, 2001).

o   Auditory learners acquire new information through sound. Distinctions that are important to them include pitch, tempo, volume, rhythm, timbre and resonance (Hemmeter, 2000; Tomlison, 2003). Auditory learners can be further divided into two groups. Aural; they learn by listening to others, and oral; they learn by talking and hearing themselves.

- Aural learners need auditory input - when they read instructions, they often become lost, because their patience for visual input wears out, it is limited. In other words, if written instructions are given, it must be given orally too.

- Oral learners need auditory out-put. As learners, they usually frustrate both parents and educators because they just cannot keep quiet. Once parents and educators learn to listen to oral learners, they realize that these learners are the easiest to understand because they tell whoever is listening just what is going on in their minds (Lipsky and Gartner, 1998; Tomlinson, 2003).

o   Motor learners acquire new information through movement. Important distinctions to them include frequency, pressure, duration and density (McLeskey, Henry and Axelrod, 1999; Tomlison, 2003, World Bank, 2008). Motor learners can be subdivided into two groups, namely:

- Kinaesthetic: they learn through the use of gross motor muscles.

- -

- **Mechanical:** they learn through the use of fine motor muscles. For example; a motor learner is someone who learns telephone numbers by dialling them. Often such a learner cannot tell someone else the number without picking up the phone (or an imaginary phone) and pretending to dial.

The first step in accommodating a modality is to determine each learner's preference. Such identification can be made through observations. Difficulties in school arise when a learner has strong preference in one modality and learning is required through a different modality (Pfeiffer and Cundari, 1999; Peters, 2004).

2.6.8 Multiple inteligencies

In the section that follows the theory of Multiple Intelligences will be discussed (Gardener, 1999). In Figure 2.1 Gardener's theory of Multiple Intelligences (2000) is illustrated.

Figure 2.1: Multiple Intelligences (Gardener, 1999).
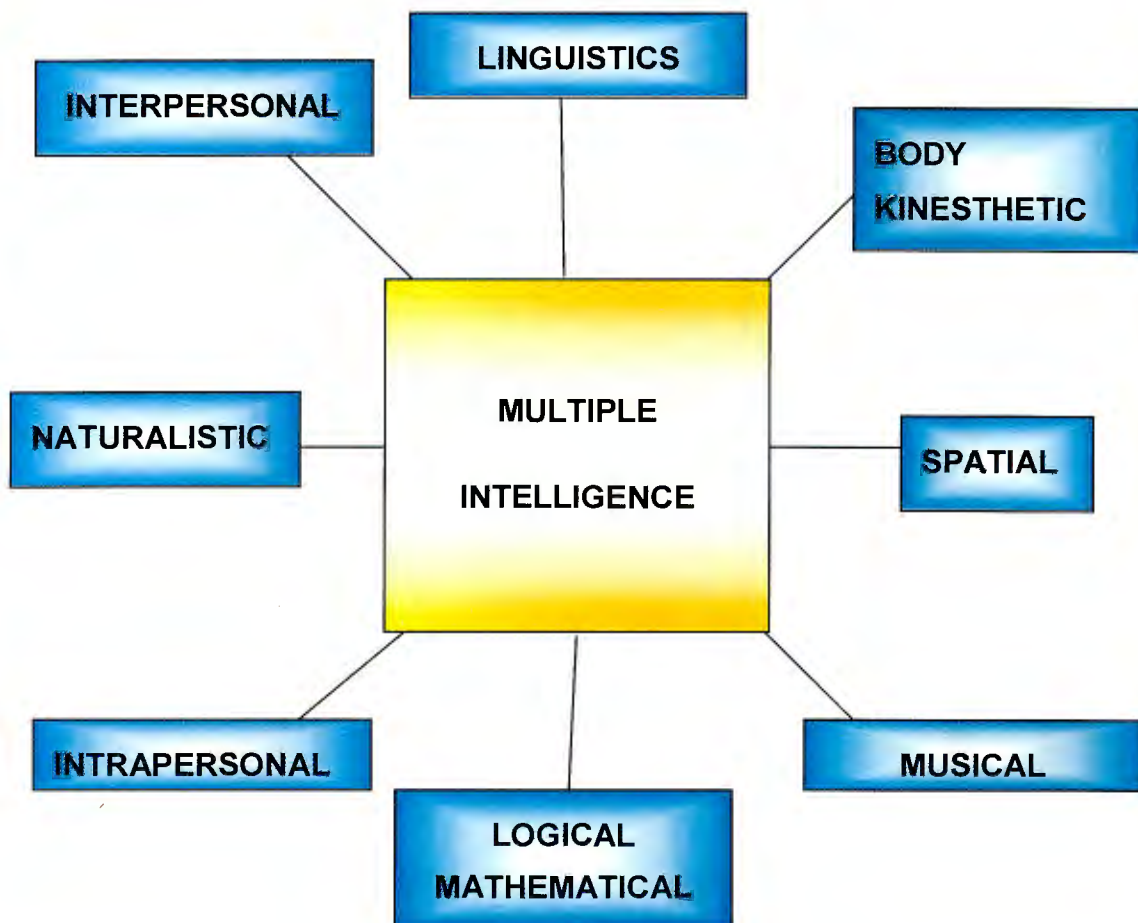
According to Gardener (1999; IEB, Assessment of Education and Training, 2006; Armstrong, 2009), there are eight different types of intelligences:

- Logical mathematical.

- Spatial.

- Interpersonal.

- Body kinaesthetic.

- Verbal Linguistic.

- Intrapersonal.

- Musical.

- Naturalistic.

The differences in the learners should dictate how the curriculum must be implemented. Recognizing that learners have different or multiple intelligences are very important in the classroom of inclusion. The learners' intelligences and their learning styles should be taken into consideration when deciding on the teaching methodologies and the assessment procedures that will be employed in the process of knowledge impartation. The educator should be aware of the different types of intelligences that learners possess because it is the guide to the choice of appropriate teaching and learning strategies (IEB, Assessment of Education and Training, 2006; Gardener, 1999; Armstrong, 2009).

Learners' process information according to the type of intelligences they possess. Theses types of intelligences can be recognized as follows:

Logical mathematical: The learners in this category are strong in Mathematics and problem - solving skills. They discern the logic and numeric patterns when solving problems. They are very inquisitive and strong in logical reasoning. These learners will ask 'why', 'how' and for 'what reason' kind of questions. Intelligence in this category means having capacities such as recognition of abstract patterns, inductive and deductive reasoning. They recognize relationships and connections. The

learners in this category can carry out complex calculations and scientific reasoning (IEB, Assessment of Education and Training, 2006; Gardener, 1999; Armstrong, 2009).

Spatial: The learners in this category have a strong visual imagination and other spatial abilities such as design, draw, read graphics and posters, and so on. They need pictures to understand, for example, puzzles, mazes, organizing space, objects and areas. They have the ability to mentally manipulate forms, objects and people in space or to transfer them to other locations. They are also sensitive to the balance and composition of shapes. They learn better from information that they can see or read and visual activities are interesting to them. These learners have capacities such as, active imagination, forming mental images and finding their way in space. They can manipulate images and do graphic representations. They can recognize the relationships of objects in space and accurately perceive from different angles (IEB, Assessment of Education and Training, 2006; Gardener, 1999; Armstrong, 2009).

Interpersonal: These learners can easily be called 'born leaders', 'people persons'. They have the ability to sense other people's moods, feelings, biases, thoughts and values. They relate very well to people and act accordingly by using the knowledge of others. They are very talkative and easily influence others. They communicate well during conflict resolution and negotiations and are very persuasive. They do well in learning experiences which are placed in social settings, being intelligent in this category means that the learner is sensitive to others and is able to put him/herself in other people's shoes. They are very good at networking and teaching others too. This involves having capacities such as effective verbal and non-verbal communication. They work well in cooperate groups and have the ability to recognize others' underlying aims and behaviour. They are also able to see things from someone else's perspective or point of view and they create and maintain synergy (IEB, Assessment of Education and Training, 2006; Gardener, 1999; Armstrong, 2009).

Body-kinaesthetic: The learners in this category have the ability to handle objects skilfully by either fine or gross motor movements. These are the kind of learners that want to get up, move around, tap, touch, fiddle with things and do things. The body-

kinaesthetic learners enjoy learning while moving about freely and touching. They learn best from handling materials, writing and drawing. Being intelligent in this category means the ability to control their bodies skilfully, handle objects with ease and being agile and well coordinated. It also involves the capacity to control voluntary movements and pre-programmed movements. They have expanded awareness of the body, the mind and body connections. They can imitate actions easily and can improve body functioning (IEB, Assessment of Education and Training, 2006; Gardener, 1999; Armstrong, 2009).

Verbal-linguistic: These learners are good with languages. They are good with using the core operations of language. They are sensitive to the meaning, sound, inflection and order of words. They are very talkative, have a good memory for dates and names. They like telling stories, a variety of voices, remember jokes and enjoy reading. Intelligence in this category includes have the following capacities: understanding the order and meaning of words and convincing someone of a course of action. They are very good in explaining, teaching and learning and they have a very good sense of humour, have a good memory and the ability to recall. They possess 'meta-linguistic' analytical skills (IEB, Assessment of Education and Training, 2006; Gardener, 1999; Armstrong, 2009).

Intrapersonal: The learners in this category have a good understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses. They exercise self-control, set realistic goals and are very comfortable being alone. These learners have the ability to develop successful working models. They know themselves well enough to make choices in favour of long-term goals, which are developed from self-knowledge. These are also highly emotionally sensitive, like thinking quietly and are very happy to work alone. This is the intelligence of the inner self. Being intelligent in this category means a high level of self-knowledge, self-discipline, independence and self-understanding. It also involves having the following capacities: concentration of the mind, mindfulness, metacognition, awareness and expression of different feelings. They have a transpersonal sense of the self and high order thinking and reasoning abilities (IEB, Assessment of Education and Training, 2006; Gardener, 1999; Armstrong, 2009).

Musical: The learners in this category have a good understanding of music. They have the capacity to perceive, appreciate and produce rhythm and melody, being

intelligent in this area means that the learner can compose a song and can play a musical instrument. It also means that the learner can sing in tune, keep time to music and listen critically to music. It includes capacities such appreciating the structure of music, frames in the mind for hearing music, sensitive to sounds, recognizing, creating and reproducing melody or rhythm and sensing the characteristic qualities of tone (IEB, Assessment for educators and training, 2006; Gardener, 1999; Armstrong, 2009).

Naturalistic: These learners are in touch with and connected to nature. Being intelligent in this category, means that the learner is highly developed in the ability to categorize, not just the natural things but also the everyday things and people around them. These learners also have capacities to notice things and patterns from nature easily. They are keenly aware of their surrounding and changes to their environment, even at minute or subtle levels. They have a very highly developed sense of sensory perception. They like categorizing or cataloguing and have a special liking for animals. They have an appreciation for outdoor activities and enjoy of activities such as camping, hiking, climbing or just sitting quietly and noticing the subtle differences in the world of nature (IEB, Assessment fro educators, 2006; Gardener, 1999; Armstrong, 2009).

It is very important for educators, SMTs and parents to be aware of the Multiple Intelligences so that academic support can be rendered according to the type of intelligences of the learner. However, personality types must also be taken into consideration because personality variations influence learning in the classroom.

2.6.9 Personality types

The ways in which learners relate to other people and to the physical and intellectual world around them, influence their learning. Interest in personality variables dates to the days of ancient Greece, the philosopher Hippocrates posited four temperaments:

- Sanguine (optimistic, energetic);

- Choleric (irritable, impulsive);

- Phlegmatic (calm, slow); and

- Melancholic (moody, withdrawn) (Reddy, 1999; Smith, 2000; McLeaskey and Waldron, 2002).

The Myers-Briggs type indicator (MBTI) (Gregory, 2000) describes sixteen different personality types. These personality types are constructed from the combination of traits found in four personality type domains, namely:

- **Introversion - Extraversion:** Introverts' energy emanates from within; extraverts gain energy from interaction with people.

- **Sensory – Intuitive:** Sensory people focus on details, facts, reality, probabilities, and the here and now. They work with the five senses and are comfortable working with their 'sixth sense'. To convince intuitive learners one must inspire in them a 'gut feeling'. If they forget data, they are often suspicious of it and can find many ways to interpret the same information (Miller, Browness and Smith 1999: 45; Nakken and Pijl, 2002; Gregory, 2000).

- **Thinking - Feeling:** For these learners being fair is as important as being treated justly. Thinkers build systems and usually need to feel appreciated for their competence. Feelers on the other hand, generally place people over principle. Rather than focusing on justice and fairness, feelers show compassion and want mercy. Feelers build relationships and usually need to feel appreciated for their efforts (Farrell, 2000: 35; McLeaskey and Waldron, 2002; Gregory, 2000).

- **Judging - Perceiving:** Judgers tend to plan and to be decisive. Their need for closure makes them comfortable working according to deadlines. Perceivers are more likely to be adaptable and tolerant. They have a need for freedom and flexibility. They normally want to explore options before deciding on an action (King, 2001: 69; Gregory, 2000).

- **Extraverted - Intuitive - Thinking - Judgers:** Learners in this category are natural leaders. They compete for leadership in a group (McLeaskey and Waldron, 2002: 41).

- **Extraverted – Sensing – Feeling - Perceivers:** These people are often *only* physically present in a classroom. They actively participate in a group. They tend

to be friendly and popular, often earning their 'claim to fame' through sporting activities (Nakken and Pijl, 2002: 50).

- **Extraverted – Sensing – Thinking – Perceivers**: Learners in this category like hands-on activities in which they are required to think. For them, games, negotiations and simulations represent ways to actively apply their thought processes. They are natural problem-solvers (Cooper, Griffith and Filer, 1999: 110; McLeaskey and Waldron, 2002: 41).

- **Extraverted - Intuitive - Feeling - Perceivers:** Learners in this category like activities that relate to real life. For them, applications of principles are more important than the learning of principles themselves. Projects have more meaning than exercises. They have great imaginations and are usually ready to help anyone in distress (Crockett and Kauffman, 1998: 76; Nakken and Pijl, 2002).

- **Extraverted - Intuitive - Thinking - Perceivers:** They enjoy complicated ideas and systems. They are entrepreneurs by nature. They enjoy analytically creative processes such as evaluation, invention, and the development of procedures (Bloom, Perlmutter and Burrell, 1999: 132; McLeaskey and Waldron, 2002: 41).

- **Introverted - Sensing - Feeling - Judgers:** These learners are thorough and accurate in their schoolwork. Details neither attract nor repel them; they manage details. They like to pass on values, but they want to make sure that the methods they use for doing so are well researched (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2000: 45; Nakken and Pijl, 2002: 50).

- **Introverted - Sensing - Feeling - Judgers:** They work for the common good. Their work is usually quiet well done. They do what is needed to be done successfully. They tend to be good learners who display creativity in their work (Dirling, 1999: 126; Nakken and Pijl, 2002: 50).

- **Introverted - Intuitive - Thinking - Judgers:** These learners are characterized by thoroughness. Organization is a *'forte'* (strength) and they are able to focus on a distant goal and 'march' toward it regardless of external distractions (Reisberg, 1998: 275; McLeaskey and Waldron, 2002: 41).

- **Introverted - Intuitive - Thinking - Judgers:** These learners expect people and activities to have a purpose. They develop theories and build models. They follow classroom procedures if they are found useful. They do not particularly consider an educator to be an authoritative figure. Their ideas come from within and they do not change those ideas simply because someone says that they are incorrect (McDonnell, 1998: 199; Nakken and Pijl, 2002: 50).

- **Introverted - Intuitive - Feeling - Perceivers:** They prefer independent projects. They may be full of ideas, but they do not usually share these without prompting. These learners may appear oblivious to possessions or physical surroundings. Generally, they are enthusiastic, loyal and capable of independent work (Snell and Janney, 2000; Nakken and Pijl, 2002: 50).

- **Introverted - Sensing - Thinking - Perceiving:** Learners in this category are nature lovers. They seek the natural world, are physical risk-takers and often choose professions such as forestry and zoology. Many are artistic and combine their love of nature with artistic flair, such as nature drawings and nature photography (Ashman and Gillies, 1997: 261; Nakken and Pijl, 2002: 50).

- **Introverted - Intuitive - Thinking - Perceivers:** They focus on thoughts and ideas. They enjoy research, instinctively systematize the chaotic world around them and theorize readily. They look for logic and expect intelligence from their educators. They concentrate well and are good at recalling new information once they understand it. Their preference is for quiet, uninterrupted, independent work (Danforth and Rhodes, 1997; McLeaskey and Waldron, 2002: 41).

Although personality types must be taken into consideration as variations in learners' personalities' influence learning in the classroom, learners are also miraculously individuals and accommodating learning style profiles and through empowering learners, educators can bring out learners' ability to learn and to perform according to the strength they draw within themselves (Leeman and Volman, 2001).

2.6.10 Miracles reside within the learners

Learner centred teaching goes beyond system, beyond method, beyond textbook, beyond the classroom, and beyond the educator to the source of success in learning

or failure to learn of the learner (Fisher, Sax Grove and Sax, 2000: 213; Fernstrom and Goodnite, 2000: 245; Leeman and Volman, 2001).

If miracles are found, the miracles will be within the individual learners. The educator's role is to orchestrate the miracle by focusing on the learner who is not learning and re-arranging the environment, task, or subject matter in order for the learner to learn. By accommodating learning style profiles and empowering learners, educators bring out learners' ability to learn (Leeman and Volman, 2001).

2.6.11 Learner-centred teaching is not an easy answer, but it is an effective way to learn

Paying attention to individual learning needs is far more effective than searching for a perfect teaching method. Looking for answers from the outside, for example, from a book, an authority, a method, may seem easier than looking for answers from the inside, that is, from analyzing the learners' mental processes and classroom interactions. However, the time spent searching for external solutions is usually wasted. Ultimately, an internal search must be undertaken to effect any miracles (Meyer, 2001: 18).

2.6.12 Learner-centred teaching can resolve style conflicts

Educators should assess the learner according to the individual learners' learning style. For example, in Mathematics, instead of giving a learner a multiple-choice test, give a test that will make him/her do calculations, in detail. In this way, the educator can clearly see what to do in order to help learners individually. Educators must believe in the power of learning *via* one's learning style preferences (Morocco, 2001).

2.6.13 Learner- centred teaching can increase success rates and lower attributions

There is a marked difference in the results between 'when the educator educates the learner, using prescribed instruction and when the educator adapts to the learners' learning style'. In the latter, learners participate actively and they get fully involved in the lesson. This means there is more understanding of the topic which ultimately

yields good results (Webb and Pope, 1999: 41; Wood, 1998: 181; Reid and Valle, 2005).

2.6.14 Tools for teaching the entire class

Federico and Venn (1999: 78; Eleweke and Rodda, 2002) state that there are no miracle methods for helping all learners to learn. Tools or mechanisms are there to be used, but the tools are basic understandings of possible permutations in the learning processes that allow educators to observe and ascertain how their learners are learning. They provide educators with strategies and tactics needed to develop a battle plan for winning the 'style wars' in their classrooms (Manset and Semmel, 1997: 155; Dyck and Pemberton, 2002).

2.6.15 Educators can teach all types of learners

Giving educators prescribed lessons often contains the insult that educators are not capable of developing individualized strategies for teaching all learners. Educators are capable of that sophistication (Voltz *et al.*, 2001:25). Therefore, it is better that educators of specific learners make suitable plans and strategies to teach their individual learners.

2.6.16 Learners' profiles, used in teaching the entire class, describe the way learners learn

Educators who have used a specific learning style may need to re-teach themselves to be able to use learning styles that will be suitable to teach individual learners. Learners' profiles normally have information on the style of learning preferred by the individual learner (Walton, 2001: 77).

2.6.17 Parents can understand their learners

Parents can also use the learners' profile to be able to understand the learning styles used by their learners, so that they can help them do homework projects and assignments successfully (Palmer *et al*, 2001: 467).

2.6.18 Learners can understand themselves

With the help of educators and parents who understand learner profiling, the learners can adapt the information to understand their own strengths and weaknesses. Such information can be used successfully to become better learners and to develop learning style flexibility (Allen and Schwartz, 2001: 50).

A collective effort to understanding learners as individuals who are all different will build bridges towards appropriate support for all learners. The educator must be aware of the eco-systems that operate around the learner that may affect the learning of the learner in the classroom. However, we will not understand the diversity in our schools until we understand inclusion. A definition of the concept of inclusion follows.

2.7 DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF INCLUSION

Inclusion refers to a participatory situation in which learners with disabilities are educated together with their non-disabled peers, with special education support and services being provided as necessary (Reddy, 1999: 3; Reid and Valle, 2005). Full inclusion means that all learners with disabilities should be educated with their non-disabled peers at all times (Bauer and Brown, 2001). Foreman, Bourke, Mishra and Frost (2001: 239) further indicate that this can only be realized in a unified education system, where all role-players work together and are supported in 'creating' learning that meets the diverse learning needs of every learner.

The above paragraph implies that inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides meaningful involvement and equal access to the benefits of citizenship.

Inclusion, therefore, means enhancing the well-being of every member of the community (Montgomery, 2001: 4).

The following authors illustrate how inclusion and Inclusive Education are currently being described:

- Although the terms Inclusion or Inclusive Education cannot be located in the law, the provision for a least restrictive environment provides the legal impetus for Inclusive Education. The underlying assumption is that Inclusive Education is an attitude or belief system, not an action or set of actions. It is a way of life, a way of living together, based upon the belief that each individual is valued and does belong (Dinnebell, 2000: 19).

- Inclusion involves learners attending the same schools as siblings and neighbours, membership in general education classrooms with chronological age appropriate classmates, having individualized and relevant learning objectives, and being provided with the supports necessary to learn (for example: special education and related services). It does not mean that learners never receive small-group instruction or that learners are in general education classes to study the core curriculum only (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2001: 265).

- Inclusive Education means that all learners are provided with the support and opportunities that they need to become participating learners and members of their school community. Every effort is made to meet the individual needs of all learners through a diverse and accommodating curriculum in a regular education environment. Collaborative planning, shared ownership and common responsibility for the education of all learners will foster a climate of acceptance and support for the family, school and community (Obiakor, 2001: 81).

- An inclusive school is an educational institution in which all available resources are collaboratively utilized to meet the educational needs of all learners who reside in its attendance area. Inclusive schools have strong site-based management and educator teams who jointly plan, implement and evaluate their educational programmes. In an inclusive school, all learners are placed in 'age appropriate' classrooms. Learning is an interactive process which relies on a variety of instructional formats to address individual needs and learning styles. Ancillary staff support is provided in the context of the core curriculum and classroom activities (Bartlett, Weisenstein and Etscheidt, 2002: 161).

- Inclusion refers to the education of learners with disabilities in the classrooms and schools they would attend if they were not identified as disabled, with the

appropriate supports and services necessary to enable them to be successful (Zera and Seitsinger, 2000:16).

- Inclusion is a cohesive sense of community, acceptance of differences and responsiveness to individual needs (Dirling, 1999: 125; Muthukrishna and Francis, 2004).

From the preceding bulleted list, it is clear that Inclusion is:

- a never ending process rather than a simple change of state. It is viewed as processes of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from cultures, curricula and communities of local centres of learning (Leeman and Volman, 2001: 367);

- acknowledging that 'all learners' and youths can learn and that learners and youths need support (Macleod, 2001: 191);

- enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners (Mushoriwa, 2001: 142);

- acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability and HIV status (Gale, 2000: 253); and

- broader than formal schooling, and acknowledging that learning occurs in the home, the community and within formal and informal contexts (Coutinho and Repp, 1999: 53; Muthukrishna and Francis, 2004).

In South Africa, the approach to Inclusive Education is to create an ordinary education system that is responsive to learner diversity and to ensure that all learners have the best possible opportunities to learn. The understanding that has developed in South Africa is that inclusion is concerned with all learners and young people who are vulnerable to exclusionary pressures in schools and communities (Department of Education, 2001). This, in turn, means the creation of a culture and an ethos in schools that value all learners irrespective of their diverse needs (Carrington and Elkins, 2002: 10).

The belief is that although inclusion focuses on marginalized groups, it increases the effectiveness of the system in responding to all learners. Therefore, inclusion is dependent on continuous educational and organizational developments within the mainstream. Inclusion would therefore involve an understanding of systemic change, and an ecological conceptualization of learning and of the school as an organization. This would mean a need to engage with social, economic, political, environmental and other factors that affect centres of learning (Corbett, 2001: 55).

It is clear that the concepts of inclusion and Inclusive Education involve the practice of including everyone in a social setting or in supportive general schools and classrooms where all learners' needs are met irrespective of talent, disability, socio-economic background, or cultural origin (Visoky and Poe, 2000: 68). The agenda of Inclusive Education is, according to McCoy and Keyes (2002: 70), concerned with overcoming social barriers to social participation in learning that may be experienced by any learner.

A discussion on 'mainstreaming' and 'integration' or 'inclusion' follows.

2.7.1 Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming refers to the inclusion of learners with disabilities in general education classrooms (for part of- or for all school days), to the extent that their specific needs can be met (Shevlin and O'Moore, 2000: 29; Spalding, 2000: 129). These learners were, in the old paradigm of a special education system, allowed to be mainstreamed only if they could keep up and 'fit' into a general education classroom and school. In South Africa, the special education system of the past provided for the creation of separate classrooms and schools for various categories of learners with disabilities.

2.7.2 Integration

According to Swart and Pettipher (2005), integration relies mainly on a social and political discourse. Issues of humanitarian and civil rights are the origins of integration. Civil rights and professional understandings of disabilities in the United States of America were previously called Education of the Handicapped (Act of 1975), now it is called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The

democratic rights of every learner are emphasized in public schools. Contrary to mainstreaming, the aim of integration is to ensure that learners with disabilities are given equal membership in the community. Integration maximizes social integration between the 'disabled' and the 'non-disabled'.

The next section presents the history of inclusion and inclusive practices in education.

2.7.3 The history of inclusion and inclusive practices in education

It is impossible to think of inclusion and Inclusive Educational practices without acknowledging the exclusive practices from which it emerged. The idea of legacy in this context puts an emphasis on certain ways of looking at learning difficulties, which have inevitably been shaped by traditions of medical and psychological practices. Many of these traditional practices are still experienced in the structure and culture of schools, for example in the language that is used as medium of instruction and in the attitudes of difference that it reflects (Ainscow, 1997: 3).

Some of the traditions originate from religion and Biblical views of difference and deformity as 'ills to be cured'. The 'legacy' of a medical model of disability is one which constructs disability as a problem to be solved or contained with procedures tried and tested much as medical remedies. The same structure exists in the 'Psycho-medical' response to learning difficulties (Danforth and Rhodes, 1997: 357; Stiker, 2002).

2.7.3.1 Psycho-medical problems

The concepts of 'psychological' and 'medical model' give an impression of both conformity of definition and an easily identifiable model for use and practice. The reality of the matter is that there is no such orthodoxy in either term, and they have no significant meaning unless understood alongside the social (or other) model, which provides critiques of these models (Cook and Semmel, 1999: 9; Stiker, 2002).

To understand this, it is important to know that while the terms may not have a distinct 'conceptual' identity, their use does clearly imply an operational meaning. That is to talk of 'medical' in the context of learning difficulties to point to practices

which refer to pathology (science of disease) for example: The medical model focuses on sickness instead of health and etiology of the problem instead of the experiences of the individual. It concentrates on the subject, specific pathology and not on environmental factors. It offers specific treatment (taking capsules/pills) rather than offering a holistic ecosystem support system and it looks at reactive measures (Reisberg, 1998: 272; Rix and Simmons, 2003).

The origin of 'special education' is in truism. The development of pathology of differences first came through medical inquiry and, then later, through psychological inquiry. Clinically based assessments have been prevalent in the last forty years and involved doctors as well as psychologists. Assessment was mostly done in one session, by doing normative testing of particular full-scale intelligence tests accompanied by 'projective' testing of personality. Ironically, the main reason for testing was simply to determine whether the learner needed a transfer to a special school of a particular category (McDonnel, 1998: 199; Thomas and Loxley, 2001).

These learners were ultimately excluded from their local schools and referred to 'special schools' that were situated far from most of their communities. However, much as this led to social exclusion, it was and still is not the only factor that leads to social exclusion.

2.7.3.2 Social exclusion

Social exclusion starts even before a learner is born. It is rooted in poverty, inadequate housing, chronic ill health and long-term unemployment. Learners that are born in poverty are denied the resources and opportunities available to other learners. Additional obstacles faced by these learners are:

- Gender;

- Race;

- Religion; or

- Disability (Krall and Jalongo, 1999: 83; Brown, Rennie, Prescott and Richards, 2000: 200; Nagata 2003; Rousso, 2003; Sachs, 2005).

Although most learners grow up in loving families who care and are passionate about wanting a better life for their children, many learners living in poverty begin and end their childhood in a state of social exclusion and educational under-functioning and experience unemployment, poverty and ill-health through and into their adult lives (Conn, 2001: 32; Nagata, 2003; Rousso, 2003; Sachs, 2005).

The challenge to society is therefore, to loosen/break the impacts of poverty on the educational development of learners because underachievement is closely linked to poverty and everything that goes with it as stated in the previous paragraph.

2.7.3.3 Underachievement

Learners from poor families tend to benefit less from schooling than those from advantaged backgrounds. There is no single or simple explanation for these differences, which widen rather than narrow as learners go through schooling. In the foundation phase, educators often work with learners who have never held a pencil or turned the pages of a book, as well as others who can read, draw, think and use language at a level well above expectations for their age (Logan, Hansen Nieminen and Wright, 2001: 280).

Cooper, Griffith and Filer (1999: 110) conducted research studies for over 30 years. The findings of their research show achievement gaps between learners from different backgrounds before they even start compulsory schooling. Prom (1999: 38; Logan, Hansen Nieminen and Wright, 2001) assert that although human beings presently have a much better understanding of the complex forces at work, they are still far from understanding the ways in which social and family backgrounds and the process of schooling itself affect learning and development and what can be done to support learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. If inclusion focuses on maximizing participation in communities and cultures the curriculum must be the medium for achieving this.

2.7.3.4 Curricular approaches

According to Dieker and Berg (2002: 92) curricular approaches comprise a very broad range of interventions through the curriculum. A highly specific and individual task-analysis programme may be seen as an intervention at a certain level of the

curriculum. In broad historical terms there has been a change of the conception of 'curriculum'. The entire history of Inclusive Education in schools might be plotted in terms of this shift that effectively encapsulates what is meant by inclusion, for if inclusion is essentially about maximizing participation in communities and cultures then in schools the medium for achieving this is through the curriculum (King, 2001: 67).

According to White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) curriculum, assessment and quality assurance are central to the accommodation of diversity in South African schools. Curricula create the most significant barriers to learning and exclusion for many learners, whether they are in a special school setting, or in an ordinary school setting. These barriers to learning arise from various interlocking parts of the curriculum, such as the:

- content of learning programmes ;

- language and medium of learning and teaching;

- management and organization of classrooms, teaching styles and pace time frames for completion curricula;

- material and equipment that are available, and

- assessment methods and techniques.

(McLeskey and Waldron, 2002: 41; Lombardo, 2000: 99).

Curriculum and assessment initiatives should focus on inclusion of the full range of diverse learning needs. The key responsibility of the district educational support teams is to provide curriculum, assessment and teaching support to schools in the form of illustrative learning programmes, learning support materials and assessment instruments Sauvca, 2003: 2; Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold, 2003: 6).

All learners must be involved in participative classroom activities in order to learn. The following paragraphs will focus on constructivism.

2.8 CONSTRUCTIVISM

According Atherton (2009) constructivism is a set of assumptions about the way human beings learn. This set of assumptions guides constructivist learning theories and teaching methods. The value of constructivism is that educators develop appropriate content and support as initiated and directed by the learners. The learner is an active 'maker of meaning'. In its 'social forms' constructivism suggests that the learner is more actively involved in a 'joint enterprise with the educator in creating or constructing new meanings'.

There are two strands of constructivism identified namely: cognitive and social constructivism.

2.8.1 Cognitive constructivism

Learners understand things individually in accordance with their developmental stages and learning styles. This is traced to the work of Piaget and John Dewey. Piaget demonstrated that the minds of learners are not empty. Learners are actively involved in the material which is presented. He also postulated the mechanism of accommodation and assimilation. John Dewey emphasized the place of experience in education, as learners learn from their experiences (Atherton, 2009).

2.8.2 Social constructivism

Social constructivism is traced to Vygosky (1962). The emphasis is on the meaning and understanding which comes out of social interactions. In his theory of the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD), Vygosky (1962) observed that when learners were assessed on tasks which they worked on without help, they did not do as well as they did when they worked in collaboration with an adult or other learners. This is not because the adult is teaching the learners all the time but because the engagement with an adult and other learners helps to refine the thinking of the learners and as a result they perform better. A learner interacting with an adult or with other learners will enter another zone or level of understanding to reach attainable levels of expectations and beyond expectations. Learning takes place when learners are stretched beyond their own knowledge within a range that is within their grasp given the prior knowledge and skills that they bring to the task (Atherton, 2009).

Figure 2.2: **Illustration of the Zone of Proximal Development adopted from Levy Vygosky (1962)**
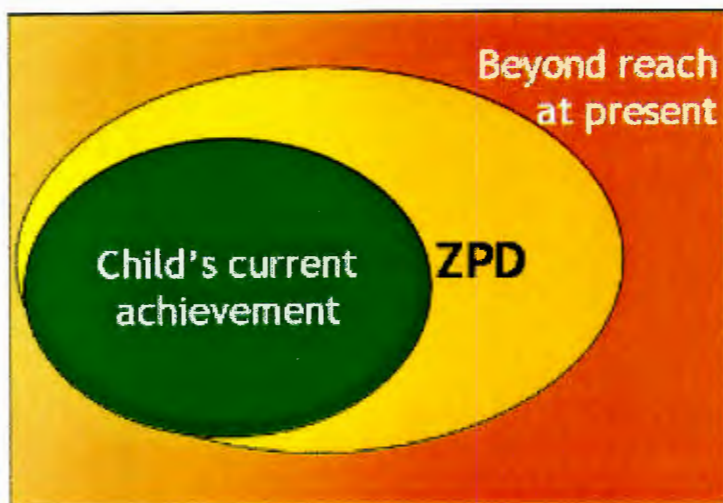
The constructivist view asks from educators to provide learners with activities and work that will make the learners engage in practical work and experiences that can enable them to manipulate the real world while they construct meaning of the world around them. The principles of constructivism influence classroom organization, curriculum and methodology.

Atherton (2009) states the principles of constructivism as **an active process** in which the learners use their senses to have an input and to construct meaning. Learning is not a passive exercise of accepting knowledge as it is taught. The learner needs to engage with the world and to construct meaning from that experience. He further highlights the principles of constructivism as follows:

Learning is learnt as we learn: What we learn today that we will help us understand and give comprehensive meaning to what we will learn in future, if it has a similar pattern (Eggen and Kauchack, 1997; Mwamwenda, 2004; Atherton, 2009).

Meaning is constructed mentally: Learners need activities that will stimulate the mind as well as the hands. Dewey calls it reflective activity. Physical activities are necessary for learning but it is not sufficient. All hands-on activities must provide something to think about as well as something to touch (Eggen and Kauchack, 1997; Mwamwenda, 2004; Atherton, 2009).

Language is necessary for learning: Vygosky (1962) points out that language and learning are intertwined. We cannot learn without the use of language. Researchers have noted that people talk to themselves as they learn. Therefore education in the mother tongue is very important. 'Human knowledge and thought are themselves therefore fundamentally cultural, deriving their distinctive properties form the nature social activity, of language, discourse and other cultural forms' (Eggen and Kauchack, 1997; Mwamwenda, 2004; Atherton, 2009).

Learning takes place through social activities: Learning cannot be separated from relationships with other human beings: educators, peers, families and even people that we casually associate with. We learn from our social relationships with other people (Eggen and Kauchack, 1997; Mwamwenda, 2004; Atherton, 2009).

We learn from the context we are familiar with: We learn from what we know and what we believe what we fear, and so on (Eggen and Kauchack, 1997; Mwamwenda, 2004; Atherton, 2009).

We build on prior knowledge: We build knew knowledge from the knowledge already built in our minds. The more we know, the more we learn. To teach knew knowledge, we must take the learner on the path that they already have and build on that, then learning becomes easy (Eggen and Kauchack, 1997; Mwamwenda, 2004; Atherton, 2009).

Learning takes time: Learning does not take place in an instant, it takes time. We need time to think through what we have learned, work on the ideas and play with them until the knowledge at hand is acquired (Eggen and Kauchack, 1997; Mwamwenda, 2004; Atherton, 2009).

Motivation is an important key to learning: Motivation is essential for learning. Learners get interested in learning when they know the reason for doing activities. Therefore hands-on activities are necessary for learners to fully engage in it because they can see the outcome or the product of their activities (Eggen and Kauchack, 1997; Mwamwenda, 2004; Atherton, 2009).

Traditional behaviourist or instructivist approaches strive for context independence, whereas a social constructivist paradigm views the context in which the learning

occurs as central to the learning itself. Learners do not transfer from the external world into their memories but they create interpretations of the world based upon their past experiences and interactions (Gallagher, 2004; Reid and Valle, 2005).

The cultural context of a learner influences the learner's perceptions of what is discussed or taught in the classroom. For example: a male learner, who belongs to a culture where boys do not do housework, will find it very difficult to obey when being asked to sweep the classroom by a female educator.

2.8.2.1 Cultural context

Symbol systems such as language, logic and mathematics systems are learned throughout the learner's life. These historical developments inherited by the learner as a member of a particular cultural group will dictate how and what is learned because young learners develop their thinking abilities by interacting with adults (Gredler, 2005). The context in which learning occurs and the social context that learners bring to their learning environment is crucial to social constructivism. Gredler (2005) indicates the following general perspectives within the social constructivism framework that inform how learning could be facilitated:

- Cognitive tools

  Cognitive tools focus on the learning of cognitive skills and strategies. In practical terms, learners will engage in projects that will give first hands-on experience. Through the project, they will experience the solving of the problems they will encounter in a real life situation.

- Idea-based

  Idea-based social constructivism sets education's priority on concepts that are important in different subjects. In mathematics, the linear equations start as early as the first grade. For example: $\Box + 1 = 2$, what is the box? This simple sum develops to an abstract of solving for the unknown number. For example: $x + 6 = 12$ and graphing the co-ordinates of x and y on the Cartesian plane. All these concepts are part of a whole, they are related. 'These big ideas expand learners

and become important foundations for their thinking on construction of social meaning' (Gredler, 2005).

- Pragmatic approach

Social constructivists, according to this perspective assert that social issues can be dealt with within the classroom as needs arise (Gredler, 2005), social issues such as racism, ethnic tensions, xenophobia, and so on. We do not have to wait for a project of unity, equality and social justice to sort out these issues, they can be solved as needs arise within the class, it does not matter what subject, and social tensions need solutions immediately. 'Knowledge, meaning and understanding of the world can be addressed in the classroom from both the view of the individual learner and the collective view of the entire class' (Slavin, 2002; Karr, 2002).

- Situated cognitive perspectives

These perspectives focus on the relationship between people and their environment. Humans are part of the constructed environment that includes social relationships. Therefore, learning should not take place in isolation from the environment. School work must relate to the environment of the learner (Slavin, 2002; Blankstein, 2004).

- Methodology in social constructivism

Blankstein (2004) and Danielson (2007) argue that this approach stresses the need for collaboration among learners and with practitioners in the society. They further assert that a society's practical knowledge is situated in relations among practitioners, their practice and the social organization and political economy of communities of practice: 'social constructivist approaches can include reciprocal teaching, peer collaboration, cognitive apprenticeships, problem-based instructions, web quest, anchored instruction and others.

Every society has a way of constructing meaning and understanding according to their cultural perceptions. Thus, the following paragraphs deal with social meaning through shared understanding of the community.

2.9 SOCIAL MEANING THROUGH SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMUNITY

Shared understanding among individuals whose interaction is based on common interests and assumptions that form the ground for their community is called inter-subjectivity (Kim, 2001). Communication and interaction entail socially agreed-upon ideas of the world and the social patterns and rules of language use. The construction of social meaning and knowledge are shaped and evolve through negotiation with the communicating groups. Through experience personal meanings are shaped and are affected by the inter-subjectivity of the community to which the people belong.

Inter-subjectivity does not only provide the grounds for communication but also supports people to extend their understanding of new information and activities among the group members (Vygotsky, 1991; Kim, 2001). What is derived from interactions between people and their environments and resides within cultures is knowledge. The construction of knowledge is also influenced by inter-subjectivity formed by cultural and historical factors of the community (Gredler, 2005; Wormeli, 2003). It is easier to understand new information and activities that arise in the community when the members of the community are aware of their inter-subjective meanings.

The above paragraphs show clearly that the schools of inclusion are affected by the eco-systems of the school. The following paragraphs will deal with eco-systemic perspectives on Inclusive Education.

2.10 THE ECO-SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The eco-systemic perspective's central argument is that individual people and groups at various levels of the social context are linked in dynamic, interdependent and interacting relationships. The ecosystem theoretical framework sees learners as being influenced by forces around them and constantly making meaning of their lives within their social context (Castle, 2001; Kim, 2005). Therefore, when considering the constructivist worldview, reference to the context of the family leads to the concept of 'ecosystem perspective' which stresses the involvement of other systems, including the families in learning activities, support and planning (Grove and Burch,

1997: 259; Castle, 2001). It further postulates that different social groups of people, including individuals, operate as systems, which depend on the interaction of their different components or subsystems for survival. This implies that every human being has a particular relationship with the world. It also includes all knowledge and conceptions of a philosophical, theological, scientific, historical and theoretical nature (Davis, 2005).

On the other hand, the individual person's interaction with a limited spectrum of objects, conditions, people, events, knowledge and concepts in the outside world represents his or her inner world. Therefore, the information a person absorbs from the outer world into his/her inner world is in accordance with the way in which it is subjectively experienced and understood (Cuddington, 2001: 463). This implies that people do not live in an objective, impersonal world. The ecological perspective recognizes that learners both influence and are influenced by their families (Colyvan and Ginsburg, 2003: 50).

In the ecosystem theory, the emphasis is not to seek the cause of the behaviour, but to explore the possible meanings of the behaviour from pupil, educator and parent perspectives. This approach, promotes an appreciation of the pupil-class-school dynamic, in connection with the home-family relationship (Essex, 2006).

From the point of view of Copper and Upton (1991) the fundamental characteristics of the theoretical aspects of this approach include the following:

- It focuses on change in the problem situation rather than on the diagonals of the problem individuals.

- It does not require elaborative or exhaustive plans either to replace or to supplement current practice. Educators who have different styles and work in a variety of settings can readily and comfortably employ the ideas.

- It enables educators to start small with manageable aspects of problems.

- It encourages divergent explanations for problem behaviour.

- It encourages light heartedness and open-mindedness in the face of chronic problems.

- It is designed to build on strengths and not to overcome deficits.

- The ideas can be mastered without any specialist background knowledge (Tomlinson, 2003; Skirtic *et al.*, 2005).

- The notion of thinking creatively and objectively about a specific problem behaviour, which is normally termed as 'brainstorming', is an integral element in the staff support group work. In the ecology of the learner: 'Understanding problems behaviour will not be found by focusing on the learner or by focusing on the school but in the study and analysis of the interactions between them (Tomlinson, 2003; Skirtic *et al.*, 2005).

Throughout literature, the emphasis is on the ecological approach as the best to use when conventional techniques are failing. It is based on an understanding that assumptions about the validity of cause and effect theory can be either speculative or unhelpful when seeking changes in behaviour. Ecosystem techniques include refraining, identifying positive motivations, thinking and responding differently about the meaning of problem behaviour. The Bronfenbrenner eco-systemic model emphasizes this notion. To clearly understand the eco-systemic model, the following paragraphs will deal with the ecological theory and the systems theory.

2.10.1 Ecological theory

This theory postulates interdependence and relationships between different organisms (including human beings) and their physical environment. These relationships are seen holistically. It further maintains that every part together with all other parts ensure the survival of the whole. When the relationship and cycles within the whole are in harmony, the whole can be sustained. The interdependence and the relationship between human beings and their ecological interactions in the social environment provide examples in this regard. Proponents of this theory postulate that ecological conflict occurs when the relationship and interdependence between different organisms, including people and their physical environment, is disturbed, in this way threatening the recovery of the entire system and subsystems within it (Kirkman, 1997: 375; White *et al* , 2006).

Ecological intervention therefore implies procedures or techniques that are designed to re-orient, harmonize and modify relationships and cycles, as well as foster interdependence within systems for self-sustainability (Meyer, 1997: 136). Costanza (1998: 2; White, 2006) also indicate that ecological intervention embraces the notion that it is impossible to understand the meaning of persons or systems in their context, unless, for example, the educator and the learner develop shared criteria for their definition. The source adds that ecological intervention embraces the notion that the varieties of different features in the environment affect both educator and learner.

White *et al.* (2006) states that in an ecosystem the components behave in ways that keep them completely together and they move towards the goal or destiny. In nature, plants, animals, air, water and earth keep each other alive and flourishing. Should an imbalance or disruption occur, the system might find a way of healing itself to maintain the ecosystem? In terms of systems, this balance must be looked at holistically. In ecosystems, natural elements interact to form an integrated complex of mutual dependence. From the giving and taking that goes on constantly within ecosystems comes sustained life, through relationships that give the inert particles their meaning and function. From the observation of an atom, we can say that it is alive because it sustains itself in forces pulling and pushing its parts, which ultimately becomes a whole. The existence and survival of the whole depends on relationships of its parts.

Human beings are made-up of complex systems. Our components are interdependent and one system cannot function without the other. Despite the changes, we seek to maintain the same pattern. Should there be a break down in one part of the system, another part will try to replace it, so that the living pattern can be balanced and maintained. 'What defines a system is the interdependence of its parts and its will to keep functioning, to stabilize itself, to support the other components and to coerce them to carry on in whatever role they play' (White *et al*, 2006). Therefore, to maintain the balance, all systems operating around the learner must work together so that the learner can grow-up and be educated in a stable environment.

2.10.2 The systems theory

This theory postulates that different levels and groupings of the social context are systems where the functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction between parts. It can be used in developing families, classrooms, schools, communities, and relationships within them, as well as between them and their social context. A school, for instance, is a system, which has different parts, consisting of its staff, learners, curriculum and administration (Allen, Tainter and Hoekstra, 2001, 2003; Allen, 2001, 2003; Allen *et al.*, 2001).

Furthermore, the theory postulates that subsystems within different systems interact with the whole. The system itself also interacts with other systems on the outside. Thus 'grandparents', 'parents', and 'children' may be seen as subsystems within a family, while the family as a whole may interact with systems on the outside, like other families, a school, or church. The systems theory maintains that cause and effect relationships are not seen as taking place in one direction only, rather they occur in cycles. Because of the interrelationship between the parts, an action in one part of a system cannot be seen as the cause for action in another part in a simple, one-directional way. Actions are seen as triggering and affecting one another in cyclical, often repeated patterns (Boyle, Kay and Pond, 2001).

Capra (1996; Allen, 2001, 2003; Allen *at al.,* 2001) and Canham, Cole and Lauenroth (2000), add that a learner with a disability exists within a larger family, and any change without considering the family system could lead to negative side effects. In contracts, knowledge about the family system can aid in the selection of learner and family focus interventions.

The systems intervention therefore implies procedures or techniques that are designed to re-orient, harmonize and modify the interaction between different levels functioning. It is characterized by an emphasis on the notion of circular cause and effect relationships between different elements of a system; such as a family or a school. This form of intervention is concerned with the role of interaction and the influence that different systems and subsystems have on each other's functioning (Allen, 2003).

The social construction of ecological knowledge implies that ecological intervention is situated in people's behaviour and their meaning in context, which in turn relates to the social construction that professionals and systems have created in their contexts. The social constructive theory about belief systems merely reflects points of view that are held about the world. There is thus no one true reality (Eigen and Oswatitsch, 1996: 78, 2003; Allen, 2001, 2003; Allen at al., 2001).

In the light of the above, it is clear that Inclusive Education needs to be considered in relation to the ecological and systems theories. The idea of Inclusive Education would then be to contribute towards the development of an inclusive society and social integration, where all citizens are able to achieve their potential, fully participate and function optimally.

Corbett (1999, 2001; Allen, 2001, 2003; Allen et al., 2001) argue that a focus on a child with disability, while ignoring other family members, is short sighted. Professionals only play a part in the form of specialized advice and support. The family members of children with disability therefore have a great deal to teach educators and other professionals, because they have an intimate knowledge of their child and his/her particular impairment.

In addition, the research also shows that in many countries the parents of learners with special education needs (Daniels and Vaughn, 1999: 49) have brought about transformation of schools and education. Inclusive Education presents many exciting opportunities as well as challenges for education in South Africa. The major challenge at this point is to develop and involve support structures from human resources available both inside and outside the school (Beverly and Thomas, 1999: 179, 2003; Allen, 2001, 2003; Allen et al., 2001).

For the successful implementation of Inclusive Education, Lombardo (2000: 39) envisages a broader role for the education support services that entails a shift from focusing on the problem in the individual and adopting curative measures typical of the former exclusive education system, to a systems approach. The recommendations include attending to social problems affecting learners, as well as coordinating the process of health promotion and prevention. Considering Shevlin

and O'Moore (2000: 30; Bricker and Cripe, 2004) view of inclusion, support services will facilitate change at all centres of learning and within the community.

Education support services differ according to their function, development and personnel. Krall and Jalongo (1999: 83; Bricker and Cripe, 2004) identify in-school support where educators support learners, support between educators and support to educators and learners from an outside the source. While the description may reflect prevalent practices, the emphasis within inclusion is on the integration and infusion of education support services, to move towards a more appropriate model of education support services. Lewis (1999: 275; Brown and Bergen, 2002) gives the following brief summary of the principles of inclusion:

- Non-discrimination, non-racism, non-sexism and non-discrimination against 'those with special needs or more specific disabilities. This would include basic curriculum aspects such as guidance and health education, as well as special education, counselling, and health services for those who have special needs (Chandler, 2002).

- Democratic processes and governance, which involves encouraging the participation of parents, educators, students and other relevant parties in support services in education (Pfeiffer and Cundari, 1999: 109; Chandler, 2002).

- The holistic development of learners, emphasizing the need to apply specialized insights, skills and practices represented in education support services for the broad health promotion and developmental benefit of all learners, and to a contextualized, eco-cultural and systemic view of community and school development.

- The next principle of service integration considers issues of health, social, psychological, academic and career development as inter-related, such that services addressing these areas cannot afford to operate in functional isolation (Prom, 1999: 39; Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold, 2003: 15).

- The principle of curriculum infusion articulates the need for health promotion and developmental aspects of support services to be integrated at every level of the

curriculum, in order to accommodate and address special needs in the general curriculum within the mainstream.

- The final principle of cost-effectiveness acknowledges that any model, particularly within the South African context, needs to be maximally effective within the constraints of limited fiscal resources (Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold, 2003: 15).

Inclusive Education may be perceived as a complex issue in terms of the practical implementation of its principles. Bronfenbrenner (1979) brings understanding of ecosystems through the environmental structure of the social ecological systems model. In this model, discussed in the following paragraphs, Bronfenbrenner highlights the systems in the environment of the learner that affect learning in the classroom.

2.11 BRONFENBRENNER ENVIRONMENTAL STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS MODEL

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory of social ecology holds a significant understanding that human development involves interchange with the environment. These systems are where individuals are nested. He identified five systems which play a major role in the life of a learner:

- The micro system;

- The meso system;

- The exo system;

- The macro system and

- The chrono system.

The relationship between the youth and the system in the social ecology is bi-directional and reciprocal. This simply means that each system in which the learner is involved has an impact on the learner. It has a level of influence on the learner. The learner also impacts on each one of the systems in the learner's social ecology. To understand the impact of each of the systems in the learner's social ecology, the

proximity, or the closeness of the learner to each of the systems must be studied carefully (Swenson and Chaffin, 2006; Paquettes and Ryan, 2001).

2.11.1 The Micro system

The micro system is the layer closest to the learner. It contains the structures with which the learner has direct contact. The micro system includes all the relationships and interactions a learner has with his/her immediate surroundings (Berk, 2000; Paquettes and Ryan, 2001). The structures in the micro system include family, school, neighbourhood, or learner care environments. The biology of the learner of the learner also plays a major role in the life of the learner. The physical challenges that the learner has may influence the way he/she relates to the environment. The impact at this level is in two directions. The learner has impact on the environment and the environment has impact on the learner. For example, the beliefs of the parents may affect the behaviour of the learner, but the learner may question the relevance of these beliefs to his life, which may affect the beliefs of the parents. Bronfenbrenner (Berk, 2000; Paquettes and Ryan, 2001) calls them *bi-directional influences*, and he shows how they occur among all of the levels of the systems in the environment. The interaction between the structures within a layer and interactions of structures between layers is the key to this theory. The micro system levels has stronger bi-directional influences than other systems and have the greatest impact on the learner but the interactions at outer levels still impact the inner structures.

2.11.2 The Meso system

This layer provides the connection between the structures of the learner's micro system (Berk, 2000). These are connections such as the learner's educator and his parents, his church and his neighbourhood, and so on. The older the learners grow the closer they get to their peers, this is easily observed with the adolescents. What happens within the neighbourhood will somehow filter to the learner. That powerful influence is diffused through many people. The school has a very strong influence on the learner although it is done within limited time. The community comes after the school as the closest system to the learner. The resources and the decisions that are made in the community can impact strongly on the family and the learner. The

people providing treatment are the least in the social ecology system because they have limited time with the learner and the family in comparison to the other systems (Swenson and Chaffin, 2006). Social ecology approaches place more emphasis on the social and cultural environment of the learner.

2.11.3 The Exo system

This layer is a larger social system in which the learner does not function directly. The structures in this layer have an impact on the learner's development through interacting with some structures in her/his micro system (Berk, 2000; Paquettes and Ryan, 2001). Parent workplace schedules or community-based family resources are given examples. The learner is not directly involved with the parents' work place, but he does feel the positive or negative force involved through the interactions with his/her parents (promotion or demotion).

2.11.4 The Macro system

This layer may be considered the outer layer in the learner's environment. It has no specific framework and consists of cultural values, customs, and laws (Berk, 2000; Paquettes and Ryan, 2001). The effects of larger principles defined by the macro system have a cascading influence throughout the interactions of all other layers. For example, if it is the belief of the culture that the responsibility for raising learners is solely the parents' responsibility, that culture is less likely to provide resources to help parents. This, in turn, will affect the structures in which the parents function. The parents' ability or inability to carry out the responsibility toward their learner within the context of the learner's micro system is equally affected.

2.11.5 The Chrono system

This system includes the dimension of time as it relates to a learner's environments. Elements within this system can be either external, such as the timing of a parent's death, or internal, such as the physiological changes that occur with the maturation of a learner. As learners get older, they may react differently to the changes in their environment and may be more able to determine how change will influence the learners (Paquettes and Ryan, 2001).

For the school to accommodate learners with diverse learning needs, curriculum must transform so that the school can embrace all the learners in the community.

2.12 CURRICULLUM TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) provides the basis for curriculum transformation and development in South Africa. The aims of the constitution are to heal the divisions of the past and to establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights, to improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person. Education and the curriculum have an important role to play in realising these aims. The curriculum aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa. Adapting curriculum to accommodate diverse learning needs is one of the ways in which it is made possible.

The promotion of values is important not only for the sake of personal development, but also to ensure that a national South Africa identity is built on values very different from those that underpinned apartheid education. The future learner is one who will be inspired by these values, and who will act in the interest of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, respect for life and social justice (Alston and Crawford, 2005; Brownlie and Guy, 2006; Chandler, 2002). What the curriculum intends to do is to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate, multi-skilled, compassionate, with respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen. The stakeholders in the school must know that the school is a part of society and the values upheld within the society must be upheld by the school. The following paragraphs deals with the envisaged citizen of a democratic South Africa.

2.13 THE SCHOOL AS A PART OF A SOCIETY

It has been indicated in the above discussion on curriculum transformation that the aims of the South African curriculum is to ensure that the learner reaches his/her full potential as a citizen of a democratic South Africa, valuing the interest of the society based on respect for democracy ,equality, human dignity, life and social justice. Considering our past underpinned by apartheid education, the following questions may be asked: What are the moral concepts and ideals appropriate to guide the

internal life of the school? What moral obligations do educators have to their students? And when can they be said to have satisfied these obligations? Constructivism supports the idea that there are different ways in which it is permissible to organize a school within a liberal democracy. Different schools need to organize according to different principles, depending on the actual and potential fundamental ethical commitments of their members. Despite having different principles, there are certain political concepts that are shared by all. Political concepts such as justice and fairness are shared by all members of society in the world (Raven, 2001, 2006).

Raven (2001, 2006) and Parry (2006) claim that the basic structure of society is the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the advantages of social cooperation. Most importantly, this will include institutions through which basic and scarce goods are distributed and which will affect the life prospects of members in fundamental ways. A social institution such as the school belongs to the basic structure of society and is considered part of the basic structure of the society for the following reasons:

- The school enables the orderly and reliable production and reproduction of society as a system of social co-operation from one generation to the next.

- Schools have deep and long-term social effects and in fundamental ways shape citizens' character (Raven, 2001, 2006; Parry, 2006).

- Schools fulfill a vital educational role with regard to the nature of society's political conception of itself. Much as it might not be the only place, it is one of the places where we learn about our rights, liberties and responsibilities as members and future citizens of society (Raven, 2001, 2006; Parry, 2006).

- The school affects the life prospects of members of society. Generally speaking, schools do so in two ways:

  o The disparity among schools in terms of the physical and emotional environment provided and the material advantages they can give their learners has a tremendous effect upon a student's later opportunities in life. This brings us to the question of whether students attending disadvantaged

schools will enjoy fair equality of opportunity. Do schools that are schooling under trees really have fair equality of opportunity in South Africa? Do schools that do not have the necessary resources to ensure effective learning, for example, textbooks, science laboratories, computers, and so on, have a fair equality of opportunity (Raven, 2001, 2006; Parry, 2006).

o   Disparity of student treatment within schools can be a major obstacle to equality of opportunity. It is within the structure of the school that early socialisation takes place. The socialisation that students receive in school tends to lead them, as they reach adulthood, into positions, but may inhibit the development of economic independence, or perpetuate disparities which exist between communities which then interfere with equality of opportunity (Raven, 2001, 2006; Parry, 2006).

The school is an institution where learners develop morally and socially. In this regard the school is second only to the family. At school, learners develop civic virtues such as reasonableness, a sense of fairness and civility, readiness to compromise, tolerance and mutual respect. This enhances the overall stability of the basic structure of society (Raven, 2001, 2006; Parry, 2006).

According to Greer (1999; Brownlie and Guy, 2006; Alston and Crawford, 2005; Chandler, 2002) principles of justice apply to schools in the following ways:

• Principles of justice put a constraint on the school in the sense that it requires the school to respect its members and let them exercise the basic rights, liberties and opportunities they are to enjoy as citizens.

• Principles of justice must ensure that enough social resources are available to schools so that disparities between schools which affect fair equality of opportunity may be reduced to levels acceptable to all.

Justice requires the school to:

• Organize internally;

• Serve its educational role;

- Establish equal opportunities;

- Help in the moral development of the learners and

- Help its members to develop and pursue a conception of good will (Greer, 1999; Brownlie and Guy, 2006; Alston and Crawford, 2005).

Greer (1999; Chandler, 2002; Alston and Crawford, 2005; Brownie and Guy, 2006) argues that constructivism requires us to inquire, first and foremost, to whom principles of justice apply. It must be justifiable to all parties involved in the school, namely:

- Learners;

- Educators;

- Parents;

- Administrators.

Therefore, different schools may require different principles; however each set of principles justifiable by constructivist reasoning must be justifiable to all members of a school to whom they are to apply.

The school as a part of the basic structure of society must recognise morally relevant features of personhood which are shared by all citizens and potential citizens. All students are potentially free and equal members of a political society and have particular educational and developmental needs. They develop a sense of their own self-worth sufficient to enable them to a fair equality of opportunity. They must develop morally in such a way as to acquire the civic virtues of reasonableness and a sense of fairness. They must learn to understand the rights, liberties and opportunities which will be granted to them as citizens, as well as public justifications of these rights, liberties and opportunities. We can clearly see that it is the school's role within the basic structure of society to help to provide for these educational and developmental needs (Chandler, 2002; Alston, and Crawford, 2005; Brownlie and Guy, 2006). Greer (1999) argues that meeting the above needs depends on the relative urgency of such needs.

Parents play a vital role in the education of learners. Involvement of parents in the school is important. The following paragraphs deal with parental involvement within the school.

2.14 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOL

Parental involvement can be regarded as parental participation, for example in attending a general school meeting; attending a scheduled meeting with their learner's educator; attending a school event; volunteering in the school or serving on a school committee (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Learners with parents who are involved in the school demonstrate fewer behavioural problems and better academic performance. These learners are more likely to complete secondary school than are students whose parents are not involved. Parental involvement gives parents an opportunity to monitor the school and the classroom activities. The parents coordinate their efforts with the educators. Learners with parents who are involved in the school are more favoured, they are given greater attention and problems that may cause learning challenges are identified by the educators in earlier stages than those of learners with parents who are not interested in the affairs of the school (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

The Yale Child Study Centre Team (U.S. Department of Education, 2003) explored the parental involvement issue in two elementary schools in New Haven, Connecticut in 1968. The two schools were both located in low-income neighbourhoods, they were 100% black, with over 80% of the students on free or reduced lunch programmes. One school had Kindergarten to Grade 4 learners with a learner population of approximately 250. The other school catered for Kindergarten to Grade 5 with a learner population of 520. It was discovered that it was necessary to consider theories from the social ecology in the interactions of individuals in groups in a social system; in this case it was schools, in order to address parental involvement, instead of addressing it in isolation. They also relied on theoretical concepts from learner development, social and behavioural sciences and psychiatry in order to understand behaviour in schools and to be able to develop an effective intervention approach (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

The observations and analysis suggested that difficult interactions between staff and students led to low levels of school success for both and that a difficult and uncomfortable school climate results in limited parental involvement and often negative parental interactions.

Their task then was to change the approach to parental involvement to an ecology approach so that they could promote adequate learner development and enhance learning.

2.14.1 Parental involvement: an ecological approach

U.S. Department of Education (2003; Epstein et al., 2007) showed that there are 3 different levels of mechanisms or operations in which parents can be involved namely:

- The school planning management team.

- The mental health team.

- The parent programme.

The school planning management team, mental health team and parent programme are discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

2.14.1.1 The School Planning Management Team

This team consists of adult stakeholders in the school, namely, parents, educators, administrators, professional support staff, (for example, the psychologist, special education educators, social workers, and any other person in the school building), and non-professional staff including the clerk, custodian and so on. The purpose of this team is to develop and implement a comprehensive school plan that focuses on the school climate and academic programmes, staff development, assessment and modification of the school programme where it is necessary. This school programme facilitates communication, establishes a sense of direction, and gives all the involved people a sense of programme ownership and purpose (U.S. Department of Education, 2003; Epstein et al., 2007).

The guidelines followed for the school programme are derived from the School Planning Management Team. Theses guide lines spread through the work of the school and give birth to a 'no-fault', problem-solving approach; consensus decision making based on learner development principles; and collaborative management which will not paralyse the school principal. These elements when coordinated effectively will create highly positive interactions among all the people in the schools. It allows parents together with educators to support whole-some development of learners in the school and improves teaching and learning in the classroom (U.S. Department of Education, 2003; Epstein *et al.*, 2007).

The School Planning and Management Team, as explained above, work with the educators, professional and non-professional support staff and the principal, they also help parents to become more active participants and develop solutions to obstacles that limit their participation. Parents are a natural link to the communities in which schools are located. This is especially important to the educators and the staff who do not live within the community where the school is located. Elected parents on this team bring the community perspective to planning and management of activities. An understanding of their learners' needs and experiences enriches the educators understanding of the culture of the learners and they can, as a result, plan social and academic programmes appropriately (U.S. Department of Education, 2003; Epstein *et al.*, 2007).

2.14.1.2 Mental health team

This team addresses the developmental and behavioural needs of learners, and shares the team members' knowledge, skills and sensitivity in the area of learner development with the class educators and administrators. This team slowly decreases the difficulties in interactions between school staff and parents, school staff and learners, and among school staff themselves (U.S. Department of Education, 2003; Epstein *et al.*, 2007).

2.14.1.3 Parent programme

This team primarily focuses on supporting the social programmes of the comprehensive school plan and the academic programme as needed. This enables the parents and staff to help the social development of learners and to motivate them

to achieve well balanced social and academic success (U.S. Department of Education, 2003; Epstein *et al.*, 2007).

Parents involved at this level take part in daily activities of the school and they join organizations of parents that exist. Parents at this level make the school become part of the community. Parents develop strong positive attachments with the school and vice-versa and become involved in the areas of their greatest expertise and interest. From the observations made during the above research project, several patterns of parental involvement were observed, namely:

- Most of the parents are interested in activities in which their learners participate.

- Parents want to assist in the classroom activities.

- Parents are interested in school programmes and practices (U.S. Department of Education, 2003; Epstein *et al.*, 2007).

Epstein, Hutchins and Greenfeld (2007) developed a five-part typology of parent participation:

- Type 1: Basic obligation of parents

- Type 2: Basic obligations of schools

- Type 3: Parent involvement

- Type 4: Parent involvement in learning activities at home

- Type 5: Parent involvement in school governance and advocacy

The Michigan Department of Education Decision Making Yardstick (2002) also discussed the developments of Epstein's Research and reported that he actually developed a framework of six types of involvements namely:

Type 1: Parenting

Type 2: Communicating

Type 3: Volunteering

Type 4: Learning at home

Type 5: Decision making

Type 6: Collaboration with community

The framework of parental involvement was developed as follows:

PARENTING

Parents should be helped in establishing home environments suitable for the support of their learners through:

- Parent education and courses for parents, that is, family literacy is practical for parents with school-going learners.

- Family support programmes must be established to assist families with health, nutrition and other services.

- Home visits at transition points to pre-school, elementary school, middle and high school are necessary

(Michigan Department of Education, 2002; Epstein *et al.*, 2007).

COMMUNICATING

Schools must design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programmes and learners' progress. These programmes must cater for the following:

- Conferences with every parent at least once year to build 'bridges' between the parents and the school.

- Language translators must be provided for the parents who do not speak the medium of instruction at school.

- Regular schedules of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications to the parents

(Michigan Department of Education, 2002; Epstein 2001; Epstein *et al.*, 2007).

VOLUNTEERING

Recruiting and organising, helping and supporting parents in school activities is very important in building a good partnership with the parents and the community.

The following paragraphs discuss what School Management Teams must do in order to involve and accommodate parents in inclusive schools.

- School and classroom volunteer programmes designed to help the educators, administrators, students and other parents, for example, standing in for supervision when educators are on sick leave.

- A parent room or family centre for volunteer work, meetings, and resources for families. This is important for accommodating the parents and giving the volunteers space of their own to plan or wait for their time to report for their activities.

- Surveys to identify talents, times available for voluntary work and locations of volunteers. This information is necessary for the effective organization of parents volunteering to help at the school. A disorganized programme may frustrate parents and the school may then lose out on their expert services (Michigan Department of Education, 2002; Epstein *et al.,* 2007).

LEARNING AT HOME

This is a very important aspect in the learner's life. The school must have a system of providing information and ideas to families about ways to help the learners at home with homework and other curricular related issues, activities, decisions and planning.

The following section presents ideas on how the school can help parents to get involved in the studies of their learners.

- Information on skills required for learners in all subjects at each grade must be supplied to the parents so that they can make sure that their learner has the necessary skills required for the grade.

- Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss school work at home. This policy is necessary for the parents to encourage their learner to do homework.

- Families must participate in setting learners' goals each year and in planning for college or work

(Michigan Department of Education, 2002; Epstein *et al.*, 2007).

DECISION MAKING

Parents must be included in making school decisions, in developing parent leaders and representatives.

The following are ideas of how parents can be involved at the decision making level:

- Active Parent Educator Association/ Parent Educator Organization, parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation.

- An independent advocacy group to lobby and work for school reform and improvements. This group should consist of people who understand what reformation of educational policy will entail in the practical sense.

- A family network to link all parents to leaders so that their voices can be heard through their leader. Parents will then not feel left-out of the school community but everybody will feel and understand that they are partners with the school and what happens in the school concerns them (Michigan Department of Education, 2002; Epstein *et al.*, 2007).

COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

Identification and integration of resources and services from the community is necessary for strengthening school programmes, family practices, learners learning and development:

- Community health, cultural, recreational, social support, other programmes and services must be given to learners and their parents.

- Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programmes for the learners, are all necessary for the learner's holistic development.

- All the above activities will bring about programmes with standards of excellence (Michigan Department of Education, 2002; Epstein *et al.*, 2007).

Parental involvement at school has a positive influence on the performance of learners at school. The following paragraphs will enumerate the characteristics of families with successful learners at school.

2.14.2 Characteristics of families with successful learners at school

Families with learners who are doing well at school have the following characteristics:

A DAILY ESTABLISHED FAMILY ROUTINE

The parents provide time and a quiet place for their learners to study and assign responsibilities for household chores to their learners. They are firm about bed-time and having dinner together (Data Bank-Parental Involvement in Schools, 2003; Sugarman, 2003; Connolly, 2005; Proctor and Groza, 2008).

OUT-OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ARE MONITORED

Learners have limited time to watch television. Parents arrange check-ups on learners when they are not home. They arrange for after-school activities and supervised care (Data Bank-Parental Involvement in Schools, 2003; Sugarman, 2003; Connolly, 2005; Proctor and Groza, 2008).

THE PARENTS MODEL THE VALUE OF LEARNING, SELF-DISCIPLINE AND HARD WORK

Parents communicate through questioning and conversation and demonstrate that achievement comes through hard work (Data Bank-Parental Involvement in Schools, 2003; Sugarman, 2003; Connolly, 2005; Proctor and Groza, 2008).

THE PARENTS EXPRESS HIGH BUT REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR ACHIEVEMENT

The parents help their learners in setting goals and standards that are appropriate for the learners' age and maturity. They recognise and encourage special talents. They also inform friends and family about the successes of their learners (Data Bank-Parental Involvement in Schools, 2003; Sugarman, 2003; Connolly, 2005; Proctor and Groza, 2008).

THE PARENTS ENCOURAGE LEARNERS' DEVELOPMENT OR PROGRESS IN SCHOOL

The parents maintain a warm and supportive home, showing interest in their learners' progress at school. They help with homework, discuss the value of a good education and possible career options. They also stay in touch with educators and school staff to check-up on the learners' progress and behaviour (Data Bank-Parental Involvement in Schools, 2003; Sugarman, 2003; Connolly, 2005; Proctor and Groza, 2008).

THE PARENTS ENCOURAGE READING, WRITING AND DISCUSSIONS AMONG FAMILY MEMBERS

The parents encourage reading and they read to learners at home too. They listen to the learners reading and talk about what is being read to determine the comprehension skills of the learners (Data Bank-Parental Involvement in Schools, 2003; Sugarman, 2003; Connolly, 2005; Proctor and Groza, 2008).

The following paragraphs elaborate on the different trends associated with parents with learners who succeed in education.

2.14.3 Trends of differences between parents with learners who succeed in education

Child Trends Data Bank-Parental Involvement in Schools (2003) highlights that parents differ in terms of the following trends:

2.14.3.1 Differences by grade

Parents of primary school learners attend meetings and volunteer to be more involved in the school activities than the parents of learners in secondary schools. The example given is that in 2003, a little over 90% of learners in kindergarten up to the fifth grade had parents who attended meetings with educators. 75% of middle school learners, 59% of ninth and tenth grade learners and only 53%, of eleventh and twelfth grade learners had parents who attended (Data Bank-Parental Involvement in Schools, 2003; Sugarman, 2003; Connolly, 2005; Proctor and Groza, 2008).

2.14.3.2 Differences by parental education

Parents who have a high level of education and income are more likely to be involved in their learners' school's activities. In 2003, for example, eighty percent of parents with a Bachelor's degree or above attended a school event, in comparison with forty-two percent of parents with less than a high school education attending these events (Data Bank-Parental Involvement in Schools, 2003; Sugarman, 2003; Connolly, 2005; Proctor and Groza, 2008).

2.14.3.3 Differences in poverty level

In households where the families live above the poverty level parents are more likely to be involved in school activities than parents of learners living in households which alive below the poverty line. In 2003, for example, forty-five percent of learners living above the poverty line had parents who acted as volunteers or served on a committee at their child's school, in comparison with twenty-seven percent of parents who acted as volunteers or served on a committee living at or below the poverty line (Data Bank-Parental Involvement in Schools, 2003; Sugarman, 2003; Connolly, 2005; Proctor and Groza, 2008).

2.14.3.4 Differences in parents language

Non-English speaking parents are less likely to attend school events and school meetings or to volunteer their services on any committee. For example, fifty-two percent of parents who do not speak English attended school meetings in

comparison with sixty-two percent of parents where one of the parents speak English and seventy-two percent of parents who both speak English (Data Bank-Parental Involvement in Schools, 2003; Sugarman, 2003; Connolly, 2005; Proctor and Groza, 2008)

The school must establish some form of support to form a link between the parents and the school. The Department of Education encourages schools to form Institution Based Support Teams so that support can be provided for parents. The following paragraphs highlight the definition, Policy contribution and the roles of the Institutional Based Support Team in schools.

2.15 INSTITUTION BASED SUPPORT TEAM

The Department of Education in South Africa is well aware of the fact that they have no means of supporting all learners that need support in terms of Inclusive Education. Thus, they have instituted internal support systems within schools. The definition of Institutional Based Support Teams is as follows:

2.15.1 Definition of Institutional Level Support Teams (ILST)

An institutional level support team is an 'internal' support team within an institution. Institutions such as early childhood centres, schools, colleges, adult learning centres and higher education institutions must have institutional-level support teams. This team is responsible for liaising with the district-based support team and other relevant support providers in identifying and meeting the needs of their institutions. Institutional level support teams should consist of educators and staff from each institution (Department of Education, 2005).

2.15.2 Policy contribution to Institutional-Level Support Teams

White Paper 6, on Inclusive Education (DoE, 2001:29) states that an Institutional-Level support Team must be established in every institution. In general, this implies all institutions such as, pre-schools, primary and secondary schools including further and higher education. The main role of these institutional-level support teams will be to start properly co-ordinated learner and educator support services. These services will provide support to the learners and educators in the learning and teaching

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process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. When necessary, these teams should be strengthened by the experts from the local community, district-based support teams and higher education institutions, that is, universities. The District-based support teams will provide the full range of education support services, such as professional development in curriculum and assessment to the institutional-level support teams in every school.

2.15.3 The role of the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST)

The main role of the Institutional Level Support Team is to support the teaching and learning process (DoE, 2005). The main functions of this team include:

- Co-ordinating of all learners, educators, curricula and institutional development support in every institution. This will include linking the support team to other school-based management structures and processes and integrating them for better coordination of activities and to avoid duplication of work.

- Making a collective effort in identifying institutional needs, especially barriers to learning, educator developmental needs, curriculum adaptation and modification at institutional levels.

- Creating collective developmental strategies to address the above mentioned needs and barriers to learning. This should include a major focus on educator development, parent consultation and support of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

- Drawing resources from within and outside of the institution, to address barriers to learning.

- Monitoring and evaluating the work of the team within an 'action-reflection' framework (DoE, 2005).

The above functions can best be met through the development of a problem-solving process that could bring together the various team members around specific needs and challenges regarding Inclusive Education. This process is discussed further.

2.15.4 The members of the Institutional-Level Support Team

Although White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education does not specify who should be members of these teams, the Report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCSNET/NCESS, Department of Education, 1997) give direction in this regard, namely: The Institution-Level Support Teams should include members of the school/institution and the community who can help the institution to fulfil the roles of the teams as mentioned above. The needs and conditions of the institution will be a determining factor on who will best fits into these teams (NCSNET/NCESS, Department of Education, 1997).

The roles of the Institution-Level Support Team should provide the guidelines for determining who should be members of the team. However, the following people have been suggested as people who may be selected to make up the *core* members of this team:

- Educators who have special skills and knowledge in areas such as learning support, life skills/guidance, or counselling (NCSNET/NCESS, Department of Education, 1997).

- Educators from the school/institution who volunteer out of interest, or who represent various levels of the programme, for example; Foundation Phase, Intermediate, Senior Phase, and so on, or who represent various learning areas, for example Language, Communication, Mathematics and Social Sciences (NCSNET/NCESS, Department of Education, 1997).

- The School Management Team of the school including, the principal, deputy-principal or any other member of the management team (NCSNET/NCESS, Department of Education, 1997);

- Educators on the staff with specialization in specific needs or challenges, for example: Offering support in diverse learning needs, and so on (NCSNET/NCESS, Department of Education, 1997).

- Non-teaching staff from the institution, such as, administrators and caregivers, and so on (NCSNET/NCESS, Department of Education, 1997).

- To strengthen 'peer support', learner representatives at senior, further education or higher education levels must be included as members of the team (NCSNET/NCESS, Department of Education, 1997).

The above core team should meet on a regular basis to 'problem-solve' on particular concerns and challenges in the institution. The following additional people could be brought into some of the team's meetings and processes to assist with particular challenges:

- Parents/caregivers at early childhood centre or school-levels, the parents or people who know the learner well, interested and specifically skilled parents (Department of Education, 2005).

- The members of the district-based support team, who have specialized in learning barriers and educator development and curriculum development (Department of Education, 2005).

- The members of the local community who have a particular contribution to make to specific challenges, for example, social workers, occupational therapists (Department of Education, 2005).

- Educators from other educational institutions, in particular, educators from full-service schools, who are trained to support the neighbouring schools and those that may be in a 'cluster' relationship with the school or institution concerned (Department of Education, 2005).

The main challenge of the Institution-Level Support Team, as with the District-Based Support Team, is to provide a holistic and integrated support services to schools.

2.15.5 District-Based Support Teams support to Institutional-Level Support Teams

The Institutional-Level Support Team may request the following specific interventions from the District-Based Support Team:

- Assist in setting-up the Institutional-Level Support Team in the school/institution.

- Assist in building the capacity of identifying and addressing the barriers to teaching and learning in the early stages of the Institutional-Level Support Team.

- Assist the Institutional-Level Support Team when they are faced with challenges that they do not have the capacity to handle.

- Inform institutional-level teams about the available expertise in the district support structure and what they should do to obtain assistance when they need it.

- Assist institutions in forming 'clusters' with other neighbouring institutions, with the purpose of providing 'peer-support';

- Assist the Institutional-Level Support Teams in identifying and using local community support networks for the purposes of improving teaching and learning processes in the classroom (Department of Education, 2005).

- Ensure that a well-coordinated and collaborative support to the institution is provided (Department of Education, 2005).

2.16 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the meaning of Inclusive Education is discussed. The vision for Inclusive Education in South Africa is described as '...practice of promoting the participation and competence of every learner, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability and HIV status. South Africa aims at forming an inclusive society in which differences are respected and valued and where discrimination and prejudice is actively combated in policies and practices (cf. 2.1).

The theories underpinning this study were discussed. These discussions led to eco-systemic perspectives of Inclusive Education (cf. 2.10) under which the ecological (cf. 2.10.1) and systemic theories (cf. 2.10.2) were discussed. The above theories acknowledge the importance of parental involvement, thus parental involvement in schools was discussed (cf. 2.14).

The next chapter will focus on the management of inclusive schools.