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In 1983 the third South African Constitution was adopted, still denying basic human rights to non-white South Africans. Human rights for non-whites were non-existent during that period. This resulted in the creation of separate parliaments for Whites, Indians/Asians and Coloured groups. Black people continued to be excluded and involuntarily made citizens in their homeland. Nevertheless, it was difficult for anyone to speak about human rights in an educational system that was so oppressive, discriminatory and extremely dehumanizing (Mubangizi, 2004). Black South Africans lost their citizenship as a result to the homeland system, which started with the Bantu Authority Act 68 of 1951 and the Bantu Homelands Act of 1970.

The 1980's witnessed an increasing demand for a democratic government, and it became increasingly clear that any system imposed by an apartheid government would fail and that a radical transformation was necessary (Du Toit, 1996 cited in Engelbrecht et al., 2007). Towards the end of 1990 there were various processes of negotiations which led to the adoption of the interim Constitution and later birth of the 1996 Constitution by which the country is now administered. Since the adoption of the Constitution in 1996, the educational systems in South Africa have changed noticeably over the last 18 years of democracy (Pillay et al., 2009). The Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, includes a Bill of Rights that asserts that all children regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, religion or disability have the right to basic education and access to educational institutions. The South African Constitution has been recognized as one of the best in the world with regards to human rights. The significance of the Constitution for disabled people is enormous since it guarantees their rights along with those of every other citizen.

### **2.3.1 Human rights for children with disabilities**

The responsibility of SAG is to provide basic education for all learners, guided by the central principles of the Constitution. It is the commitment of SAG to identify and recognize a new unified education and training system, based on equality and redressing past imbalances. Likewise, the support of inclusion is evident in many articles of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the 2010 Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Section 1 (a) of the South African Constitution (1996), founded the democratic state of common citizenship on the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom. The values call upon all South Africans to take up the responsibility and challenges of building a humane and caring society to ensure that all learners, with and without disabilities, pursue their learning potential to the fullest. Basic education is a fundamental right of all South Africans. Section 29 (1) states that everyone has the right to basic education. The fundamental right of basic education is further developed in the Constitution in Section (2), which commits the state to the achievement of equality. The right to equality is probably the most applicable when introducing education at a primary and secondary level. Prior to 1994, inequality and discrimination were essential characteristics of the South African society.

Section 9 (3), (4) and (5) of the South African Constitution (1996), commit the state to non-discrimination. These sections are particularly important for protecting learners with or without disabilities.

Article 2 of the CRC prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Article 5 of the CRPD states the following;

Article 5: States Parties recognize that all persons are equal before and under the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law.

1. States Parties shall prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantee to persons with disabilities equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds.
2. In order to promote equality and eliminate discrimination, States Parties shall take all appropriate steps to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided.
3. Specific measures which are necessary to accelerate or achieve de facto equality of persons with disabilities shall not be considered discrimination under the terms of the present Convention

As noted in the literature, discrimination was the heartbeat of segregation in South Africa prior to 1996. Article 2 of the CRC, Article 5 of the CRPD and Section 9 (3), (4) and (5) of the South African Constitution (1996), identify the rights of “all” (disabled or non-disabled persons) as equal before and under the law.

Article 3 of the CRC, Article 7 (2) of the CRPD and the Child Care Act 38 of (2005), states that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. However Article 7 of the CRPD particularly focuses on children with disabilities.

Article 7:

1. States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children.
2. In all actions concerning children with disabilities, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
3. States Parties shall ensure that children with disabilities have the right to express their views freely on all matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, on an equal basis with other children, and to be provided with disability and age-appropriate assistance to realize that right.

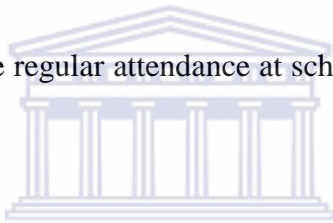
In the past persons with disabilities were seen as objects of pity. However, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2010), changed disability from an object to a subject. Articles 28 and 29, of the CRC clearly stipulate the support for inclusion in education.

Article 28 states the following:

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:
  - (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;



- (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
- (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
- (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.



2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.
3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 29 states the following:

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

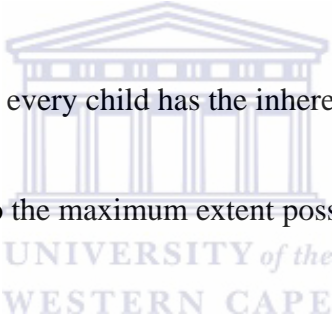
2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principle set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education

given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

The above articles emphasize that the State makes education compulsory, available and free to all, and that different forms of secondary education be 'accessible to every child', and set as the purpose of education 'the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential'.

Article 6 of the CRC requires a guaranteed development of the child to the maximum.

Article 6 states the following:

- 
1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.
  2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

However, Article 19 (b) & (c) of the CRPD indicates that persons with disabilities should be included within their communities.

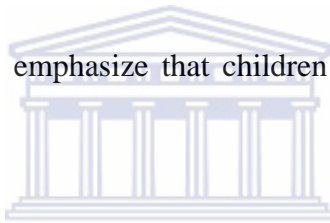
- (b) Persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community;
- (c) Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.

Similarly; Article 30 of the CRC recognizes the right of the child to participate fully in the culture of the community.

#### Article 30

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

Articles 9, 10 and 18 of the CRC emphasize that children should not be separated from their parents,



The above-mentioned Articles stipulate that children must be seen as individuals with rights, views and feelings of their own. Every child has a right to respect, dignity and consideration of his or her views and best interests. Taking into account the provisions concerning the family, the community, the right to social integration and personal development, these Articles constitute and justify a right to inclusive education.

#### **2.4 A basic right to education**

The education system in South Africa has undergone extensive policy changes since 1994, reflective of the Government's desire to restructure and transform a divided, fragmented, discriminatory and authoritarian education system into a more democratic, open, flexible and inclusive system (Sayed, 1998; Welton, 2001; Pillay et al, 2009). Under the apartheid

education system, education for learners who experienced learning difficulties and learners with disabilities was called special education (DOE, 2002:6).

Special needs education in South Africa is a sector where the negative effects of apartheid remain most evident. The segregation of learners on the basis of race was extended to incorporate segregation on the basis of disability (DOE, 2001). The Social Assistance Act No 13 of 2004 defines disability in respect of an applicant's moderate to severe limitation, to his or her ability to function as a result of a physical, sensory, communication, intellectual or mental disability.

In the past special education and support services were mainly provided to a small number of learners with special educational needs in special classes in mainstream schools or in special needs schools (DOE, 2002). Prior to 1994, black learners with disabilities experienced great difficulty regarding access to education. Very few special schools existed and they were limited to admitting learners according to firmly applied categories. Learners who experienced learning difficulties because of severe poverty did not qualify for educational support. The categorization system allowed only those learners with natural, medical disabilities access to support programmes. (DOE, 2001:9).

At this time very few special schools existed to accommodate the needs of learners with various disabilities and admission was limited, as it was restricted according to certain segregation criteria which included race and disability. Most learners with disabilities were either not in special schools, or had never been to a school because mainstream schools could not adequately meet their needs. (DOE, 2002:7). Schools, that accommodated white children with disabilities, were extremely well resourced, while schools that accommodated black

disabled learners were rare and systematically under-resourced (Education White Paper, 2001: 9). Children who were identified as having special educational needs were labelled and excluded from mainstream education and society (Du Toit 1996 cited in Engelbrecht et al., 2007:3).

Children were placed in special settings and actually believed that this was done in the best interest of the child. Increasingly the concern for segregated special education appeared and it was recommended that it was not in the best interest of those children with disabilities to be separated from mainstream education or society as a whole. According to Chambers (2001:12), when we remove children with disabilities from their peer groups, we deny non-disabled children the opportunity to learn about the experience and become aware of disability. Thus, inclusive education is a human right and research suggests that children perform better academically and socially in an integrated environment (Chambers, 2001:13).

At the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, great emphasis was placed on inclusive education. The Salamanca Statement on principles, policies and practice in special needs education was the resolution that became the driving force of inclusive education. The statement was adopted by 92 countries and 25 international conferences whereby the message was clearly articulated (Engelbrecht, et al., 1999:14-15).

We the delegates of the World Conference on Special Needs Education representing ninety-two countries and twenty-five international organizations, hereby affirm our commitment to Education for All, recognizing the necessity and urgency of promoting education for children, youth and adults with special education needs within regular systems, and further hereby endorse the Framework of Action on Special Needs Education, that governments and organizations may be guided by the spirit of its provisions and recommendations (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1994a:9).

The Salamanca Statement argued that regular schools with an inclusive orientation are “the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all” (Ainscow, 2000:16). These are however an aspect of the Salamanca Statement that South Africa’s White Paper has disregarded. The Salamanca Statement encourages governments to plan and educate all persons throughout both public and private sectors (UNESCO, 1994a:13). South Africa has a well-established and growing private education sector that serves 2.9% of South African learners (DOE, 2008:5). Nevertheless, the White Paper does not mention the role that ordinary independent schools play in an inclusive education and training system. This omission is noteworthy since there is evidence that independent ordinary schools in South Africa are pursuing inclusion in education (Cohen, 2000:11; Gardener, 2003:22 cited in Walton et al., 2009).

Furthermore, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1997 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution on the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities.

Education in mainstream schools presupposes the provision of interpreter and other appropriate support services. Adequate accessibility and support services designed to meet the need of persons with different disabilities should be provided (UN, 1994:15).

Major changes were taking place at a national level, because of the new democracy in South Africa. The South African Federation Council on Disability (SAFCD) called for the development of single inclusive educational systems for South Africa and the statement was very clear and to the point.

Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) have the right to equal access to education at all levels in a single inclusive educational system that is responsive to the diverse needs of all learners, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning, as well as different language needs in the case of

deaf learners where their first language is sign language, and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, technical strategies, resource used and partnerships with their communities (The South African Federation Council on Disability (SAFCD) 1995:1).

As a result, 28 South African organizations and institutions were actively involved with the development of this statement. A strong sense of international and national call for inclusive education materialized, a call which fitted together with the South African Interim Constitution, the White Paper on Education and the Education and Training policy of the majority party in the Government of National Unity, the African National Congress.

In 1996, the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) were appointed. The NCSNET and NCESS were charged with conducting research and consulting widely, including all relevant stakeholders in the process. The NCSNET and NCESS have been structured through joint task groups focusing on the main aspects of the terms of reference of the NCSNET and NCESS. They were commissioned by the Minister of National Education to investigate the state of special education and support in South Africa and were given 12 months to complete their investigations and to make recommendations for a new national policy (Daniels, 2010:633; Naicker, 2000:2) .

Given the widespread differences in special schools and specialized support provisioning amongst racial categories, but also amongst provinces and between rural and urban communities, it was critically important that the Commission itself be as inclusive as possible, representing the diversity in the country and providing opportunities to surface the views of all stakeholders, particularly the previously marginalized (Daniels, 2010:633;



Engelbrecht, et al., 1999:18-19). The primary function of the Commission was to conduct research, utilizing literature from within and without South Africa.

Historically the areas of special needs education, or specialized education, and education support services provision have reflected the general inequalities of South African society, with disadvantaged learners (the majority of learners) receiving inadequate or no provision. Specialized education and support has predominantly been provided for a small percentage of learners with disabilities within “special” schools and classes. Most learners with disability have either fallen outside of the system or been “mainstreamed” by default. The curriculum and education system as a whole has generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population, resulting in massive numbers of dropouts, putouts, and failures. While some attention has been given to the schooling phase with regard to “special needs and support”, the other levels or bands of education have been seriously neglected.

As was to be expected, the Commission found vast inequalities in provision across race categories, and rural and urban settings. Approximately 288,000 school age children with disabilities were out of school. About 50% of learners in the country in 1997 could be considered to have ‘special needs’. Thus the Commission proposed the term ‘barriers to learning and development’ be used rather than ‘special needs’. So many learners had the need for specialized provision or support that this term seemed more appropriate. So often the barrier was not intrinsic to the learner but rather a barrier in the system (Department of Education, 1997). Similarly, the suggested documents and statements need to be taken into consideration since they are compatible with the rights discourse (UNESCO, 1994a:9; UN, 1994:15; SAFCD, 1995:1).

## **2.5 Inclusive education**

A child is “included” when he or she is viewed as an equal partner in the school community. The more facilitating and accommodating the environment is to the needs of children, the

fewer barriers there will be to children's development and learning (Salend, 1999:205). Inclusion, relating to mainstream schools, encourages schools to review their structures, approaches to teaching, student grouping, and promote the schools to meet the diverse needs of all students (Farrell, 2003).

When the inclusive education project was introduced into the pilot project schools, some teachers felt nervous because they did not understand what inclusive education was all about. Some were confused because they did not understand what they were supposed to do. Others were worried because they had not been trained to teach children who were not able to participate in learning activities like the other children in their classes. Many teachers thought that children with disabilities or learning difficulties had to be taught by teachers with special qualifications. Others did not understand that the learning problems of many children were caused by the way teachers taught them, or the school system or even problems at home or their community (DOE 2002:13).

Teachers' perceptions of inclusive education are significant because they can influence the degree to which learners with special needs are accepted and accommodated within mainstream schools (Koay, Lim, Sim & Elkins, 2006).

Classroom teachers are the primary resource for achieving the goals of inclusive education and training systems. Therefore, teachers will need to improve their skills and knowledge and develop their own. Teachers should be trained to think and work in a new frame of reference or mind-set, since a disturbing number of teachers in South Africa is confused and insecure because of a series of radical changes that have transformed their working environment (Prinsloo, 2001:345).

Transformation and change must therefore focus on the full range of education and training services: the organizations - national and provincial departments of education, further and higher education institutions, schools (both special and ordinary); education support services; curriculum and assessment; education managers and educators; and parents and communities (DOE, 2001:125).

The most successful training is likely to occur in schools that have some experience of working with learners with special educational needs. Classroom support activities involved action research.

Action research is when a researcher works with a teacher in their classrooms to see how they are teaching. In a way, where the researcher helps the teachers to think about (or reflect on) how they can improve the way they are teaching and doing things. The researcher also helps the teachers to develop the skills to reflect on their own teaching so they become independent reflective teachers. (DOE 2002:16)

The success of inclusive education depends heavily on the perceptions and attitudes of teachers within mainstream schools toward learners with special needs and learners who experience barriers to learning. The positive perceptions and feelings of teachers tend to encourage successful inclusion; this has been found to be influenced by various factors. Research indicated that teachers' acceptance or resistance to the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning into mainstream classrooms is related to the knowledge base and experiences of educators (Stoler 1992; Taylor, Richards, Goldstein & Schilit, 1997). However, further research indicated the lack of necessary skills to teach learners with barriers to learning are the most common source of educator resistance (Kauffman, Gerber & Semmel, 1988).

Therefore, teachers with specialist training in special needs education work collaboratively with general classroom teachers in providing support to learners within the classrooms (Walton, Nel, Hugo & Muller: 2009). Specialist support personnel seem to have a vital role to play in the inclusive practice of schools in developed countries. Inclusive classrooms

represent diverse learning needs and appropriate support needs to be provided to meet the needs of all learners.

The South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 provides a basic structure of an inclusive education and training system through its announcement of the right of equal access to basic and quality education for all learners on a non-discriminatory basis. No learner may, therefore, be denied access to any school on any grounds, including disability, language or learning difficulty.

Inclusive education is the term used to describe educational policies and practices that uphold the rights of learners with disabilities to belong and learn in mainstream education (Engelbrecht & Green 2007:4). Similarly, inclusive education is the education of all students classified as disabled together with non-disabled in general classrooms with appropriate professional services (Bowe, 2005). The goal of inclusive education is to combat discriminatory attitudes, create welcoming communities, build an inclusive society and achieve equal educational opportunities for all. It strives for a more equitable, quality education system and appeal to ordinary schools to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners in mainstream education.

The Education White Paper 6 (2001) was published, outlining a route for South African education to move into the international trend of inclusion. Inclusion is defined by Engelbrecht et al., (1999:6) as: “A shared value which promotes a single system of education dedicated to ensuring that all learners are empowered to become caring, competent and contributing citizens in an inclusive, changing and diverse society”. However, Magare, Kitching & Roos (2010), define inclusive education as the inclusion of learners who

experience barriers, for example learning difficulties in reading, writing, mathematics, speech, language and impairments, barriers to communication and so on, to learning in a regular educational environment, regardless of their diverse personal or interpersonal needs, the contextual challenges and the adversities they have to deal with.

Below is the definition of inclusive education extracted from UNESCO (1994b:61) in their section for special needs education:

The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school.

Inclusion emphasizes that learners who experience barriers to learning should attend their neighbourhood schools and be taught alongside their peers in regular classrooms (CSIE, 2000:12; Giangreco, 1997:194; Morgan & Demchak 1998:26 cited in Walton et al, 2009).

Barriers to learning and development is a term that was identified by the NCSNET and the NCESS to extend the scope of needs for disabled persons and to other learners whose special needs often arise as a result of impediments to learning and development (DOE,1997) .

Similarly A barrier also refers to developmental delays, physical, neurological and sensory impairments (Muthukrishna & Sader, 2004).

Barriers to learning and the participation in schools in South Africa commonly arise from a range of factors, including socio-economic deprivation; negative attitudes to and stereotyping of difference; an inflexible curriculum; inappropriate languages or language of learning and teaching; inappropriate communication; inaccessible and unsafe built environments; inappropriate and

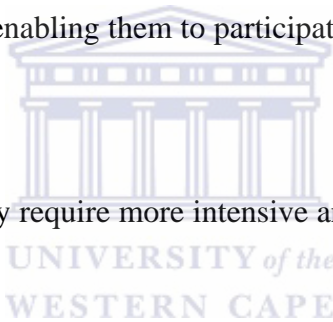
inadequate support services; inadequate policies and legislation; the non-recognition and non-involvement of parents; and inadequately and inappropriately trained leaders and teachers in education (Department of National Education, 2001).

The important barriers identified in the education system include: attitudes of teachers and non-disabled learners in mainstream schools, socio-economic conditions, inflexible curriculum, language skills and communication, inaccessible and unsafe building environments, inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services, lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy, lack of parental recognition and involvement, disability and the lack of human resource development strategies (DOE, 1997).

In July 2001, the South African Ministry of Education released *Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (Education White Paper 6: special needs education- Department of National Education, 2001). The Educational White Paper 6 (2001:16) describes inclusive education and training systems as the following:

1. Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support.
2. Accepting and respecting the fact that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which are equally valued and an ordinary part of our human experience.
3. Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners.
4. Acknowledge and respect differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status.

5. Acknowledging that inclusive education is broader than formal schooling and learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal modes and structures.
6. Inclusive education and training are about changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners.
7. Inclusive education and training are about maximizing the participation of all learners in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimizing barriers to learning.
8. Inclusive education and training are about empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning.



It is obvious that some learners may require more intensive and specialized support to be able to develop to their fullest potential.

Furthermore, there is often a confusion regarding mainstream schools and special educational schools. Mainstream schools are schools, situated in various communities, who cater for the “ordinary” child. Special needs schools are established to cater for the needs of children with various disabilities, which include children with specific disabilities such as physical disabilities, visual and hearing impairment, blindness and learning disabilities (Chambers, 2001:11). However, inclusion inter-related with mainstreaming offers the learner extra support to be integrated in a “normal” classroom routine (DOE, 2001:17).

There is also a distinction between mainstream and inclusion as described.

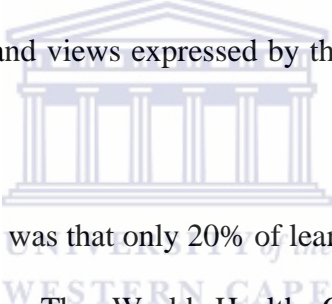
Mainstreaming or integration	Inclusion
Getting learners to fit into a particular kind of system or integrating them into an existing system.	Inclusion is about recognizing and respecting the differences amongst all learners and building on the similarities.
Giving some learners the extra support so that they can 'fit in' or be integrated educators and the system as a whole so into the 'normal' classroom routine. Learners are that the full range of learning needs	Inclusion is about supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. The focus is on teaching and learning actors, with the emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners
Mainstreaming and integration focus on changes so that they can 'fit in'. Here the focus is on the learner.	Inclusion focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs. The focus is on the adaptation of and support systems available in the classroom.

The Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 is a prime example of the legislative framework ratified in South Africa with the intention of providing means of promoting sound physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional and social development of all children. The Act contains all the founding provisions to ensure that children's basic needs are met wherein the preamble and clauses require all spheres of government to implement the Act in a coordinated manner to the maximum extent of available resources (Jamieson & Proudlock, 2007: 2).



One of the core objectives stated in the Children's Act 38 of 2005 is to give effect to the constitutional rights of children, namely family care, parental or appropriate alternative care when a child is removed from the family environment, social services, protection from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation wherein the best interests of a child are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child.

The Act declares that the child has responsibilities suitable to their age, developmental level including responsibilities toward their family, community and the State. Upon reaching the age of 18 years, the child becomes an adult in which the Act stipulates, "Every child that is of such an age, maturity and stage of development has the right to participate in an appropriate way, and views expressed by the child must be given due consideration".



As a result the impact of this policy was that only 20% of learners with disabilities were accommodated in special schools. The World Health Organization (WHO) has calculated that between 2.2% and 2.6% of learners in any school could be identified as disabled or impaired. An application of these percentages to the South African school population would project an upper limit of about 400,000 disabled or impaired learners. Current statistics indicate that only 64,200 learners with disabilities or impairments are accommodated in about 380 special schools. This indicates that, potentially 280,000 learners with disabilities or impairments are unaccounted for. It is apparent the result of decades of segregation and systematic under resourcing is the imbalance between special schools that created exclusivity.

### **2.5.1 Inclusive education in primary schools**

Research indicates that inclusive education has been promoted in primary schools in South Africa (Clark, 2007; DOE 2002; Elloker, 2004; Engelbrecht et al., 2006; Jacobs 2010; Mayaba, 2008; Molope, 2007; Prinsloo, 2001; Stofile, 2008),). Learners and teachers in primary school settings were faced with the reality of including learners with disabilities in their class rooms. Due to inclusion in primary schools, some of these schools were made accessible to accommodate learners with physical disabilities (DOE, 2002:45). However the attitude of teachers in secondary schools plays a critical role in ensuring the success of inclusive education since the success of inclusion is sustained through positive attitudes (Nel, et al., 2011:77).

### **2.5.2 Inclusive education in secondary schools**

Research conducted in this area of studies in South Africa has mainly focused on inclusive education in primary schools (Clark, 2007; DOE 2002; Elloker, 2004; Engelbrecht et al., 2006; Jacobs 2010; Mayaba, 2008; Molope, 2007; Prinsloo, 2001; Stofile, 2008). However, inclusion in secondary schools was almost non- existent in the Cape Town District area (Loebenstein, 2005; Mbengwe, 2010). Research indicates that the majority of studies have been conducted outside of South Africa (Cook, Semmel & Gerber, 1999; Nel, et al., 2011; Salend, 1999; Sulaiman, 2010 cited in Walton et al., 2009: 108). According to the Education Management District Centre only two inclusive secondary schools were identified in the Cape Town area. While there is evidence of integration of the disabled into mainstream primary schools it has not been fully examined in mainstream secondary schools.

## 2.6 Adolescence

The choice of understanding inclusive education in secondary schools is that this is a challenging phase of development for learners in secondary schools which is referred to as adolescence. According to Louw & Louw (2007:279) adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood; however the stages of adolescence vary from 11 to 13 years and end between the ages of 17 and 21 years. During this transition, secondary learners have to deal with rapid changes in their physical appearance, emotional instability, hormonal fluctuations, sexual maturity, peer pressure and increased expectations of parents, family members, teachers and the community. During this stage adolescents become more aware of themselves as an independent unique person with a specific place in society.

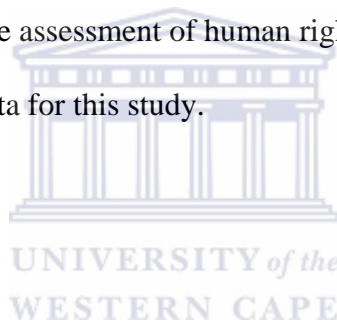
According to Erickson (1963) adolescents need to define who they are, what is important to them and what directions they want to take in life. Erikson (1963) refers to the identity development as an identity crisis, which is a temporary period of confusion, during which the adolescent explores, questions existing values and experiments with alternative roles in order to develop their own set of values and goals. Furthermore, adolescence could also be described as a time of evaluation, decision-making, commitment and a time of carving out a place in the world, with the environment that plays a major role in the development of the adolescent (Santrock, 2003, cited in Sulaiman 2010).

During adolescence, adolescents search for new intimate relationships either in a form of friendship or a group where they can feel a sense of belonging. These relationships also play a role in exploring their identities (Louw, et al, 2007:338). Studies suggest that students with disabilities, educated in an inclusive secondary school, had more social contacts and richer

friendship networks that included peers without disabilities (Fryxell & Kennedy 1995, cited in Salend, 1999). Placement in inclusion programs has resulted in improved educational outcomes for students with disabilities, with greater success in making transition to adulthood (Salend, 1999).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

Since 1910, South Africa was governed by a segregated system of apartheid and became a democratic country in 1994. As a result, there has been major transformation in the South African education systems. This chapter attempts to highlight the successful implementation of inclusive education alongside the assessment of human rights. The next chapter reports the methodology used to collect the data for this study.



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodology used in the study. The data collection process and the data analysis process are discussed and a review of the truthfulness of the data and ethical consideration is specified.

#### 3.2 A qualitative approach

This study used a qualitative exploratory approach to describe and understand the experiences of teachers, learners and the principal regarding inclusive education for learners in mainstream secondary schools. According to Creswell (1994:2) "A qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting". Similarly Babbie and Mouton (2009:270), state that the primary goal of qualitative research is to describe and understand, rather than explaining human behaviour.

A qualitative research design is relevant to this study as it allows the researcher to assess the experiences of the individuals and groups, seeking how people construct the world around them, by what they are doing, what is happening to them and what is meaningful (Gibbs, 2007). Furthermore, with a qualitative research approach the researcher was more flexible to explore other underlying matters in relation to the topic. Therefore the theoretical approach

for the purpose of this study was an interpretivist research approach. The interpretivist approach recognized the self-reflective nature of qualitative research and emphasized the role of the researcher as an interpreter of the data and the individuals who represented the information (Creswell 2007:248). It is believed that people continuously interpret, create and give meaning to, define, justify and rationalize their actions (Babbie, et al., 2009:28). Furthermore, people are continuously constructing, developing, and changing the everyday interpretations of their world. Similarly, qualitative interpretivist approach identified how the principal, teachers and learners responded to learners with special needs in mainstream secondary schools. The interpretivist approach assisted the researcher to observe the reason that the participants gave for their actions and behaviour and examined the relations between beliefs and behaviours (Donatella & Keating, 2008).

Whilst there is a clear need for both quantitative and qualitative research in the field of inclusion (Engelbrecht, 2006) it is only through qualitative research that the meaning and diversity of perspectives of inclusion can be identified.

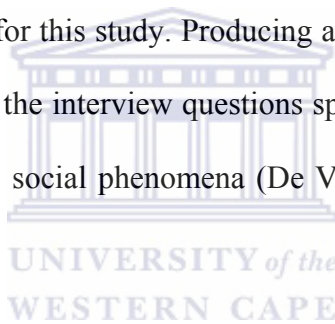
### **3.3 Participants**

The participants were the principal, deputy principal, teachers and non- disabled learners at a mainstream secondary school, since they had direct interaction with learners who experience various challenges regarding inclusion. The participants were purposefully selected for the interviews. According to Creswell (2007), criterion sampling works well to select the participants for the study. Contact was made with the Educational Management District Centre who assisted with the identification of two inclusive schools. However interviews were only conducted at one school.

Criteria for participation in the study included the principal, teachers and learners at one of the identified inclusive secondary schools in the Cape Town District area. Interviews were conducted with the principal, deputy principal and the 4 teachers. Focus group interviews were conducted with 6 non-disabled learners. Parents were requested to provide written consent for the learners who participated in the study. There were 12 participants included in this study.

### **3.4 Data collection tools**

An interview schedule for the principal, teachers and learners was used to engage with the participants to collect information for this study. Producing an interview schedule beforehand allowed the researcher to structure the interview questions specifically in order to gain an in-depth and thorough account of the social phenomena (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport 2011:352).



Open-ended questions were asked where the participants provided their own answers to the questions (Babbie et al., 2001: 233). Open ended questions also led to a textual and structural description of the experience, and finally provide an understanding of the common experiences of the participants (Creswell 2007). The questions used to guide the discussions were as follows:

#### **Interview schedule for the principal and deputy principal**

1. A basic framework of questions is outlined below. The individual interview with the principal will centre on this topic of discussion.
2. What is your attitude towards the whole notion of Inclusive Education?

3. What was your attitude initially towards learners with special needs?
4. Do you have any learners with special needs at your school?
5. Are you aware of the disability or the level of disability of learners with special needs in your classroom?
6. How did it come about that your school was chosen by the Department of Education to become an inclusive school?
7. As the principal of the school, how do you feel about learners with special needs at your school?
8. Why do you think learners with disabilities should be accepted in mainstream schools?
9. Compared to other schools in your area, what accommodations are in place at your school regarding inclusive education?
10. How has the school building and the physical appearance of the school been modified to accommodate learners with physical disabilities?
11. Have you made adaptations to your planning and teaching programs to include the need of learners with special needs?
12. How do learners in your class respond to learners with special needs?
13. As a principal do you support the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools?
14. Who do you think is the key person(s) responsible for inclusive education at your secondary school?
15. What role does the external community (parents, businesses, organizations, universities) in the inclusion of learners?



























































































































